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# ROMA ANTIQUA ET RECENS

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57

**ROMA ANTIQUA ET RECENS.**



①  
[Pierre Mussard.]

ROMA ANTIQUA ET RECENS;

OR,

*THE CONFORMITY OF ANCIENT AND  
MODERN CEREMONIES,*

SHOWING

FROM INDISPUTABLE TESTIMONIES

THAT THE

**Ceremonies of the Church of Rome**

ARE BORROWED FROM

THE PAGANS.

[Translated from the French  
by James D. ...]

REPRINTED FROM THE EDITION OF 1732.

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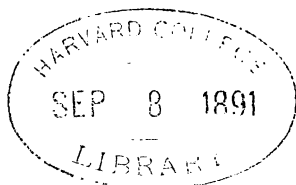
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To

THE HONOURABLE

SIR MATTHEW DECKER, BART.,

THIS TREATISE IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED BY HIS MOST

OBEDIENT AND MOST OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES DU PRÉ.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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A VERY large number of devout and earnest Christian people look with great anxiety on the advance of Romanism and Ritualism in the present day. Concerning it fears may indeed be exaggerated ; but 'ceremonial' is the most marked feature of modern religious life, and it should be taken into our serious consideration. Ceremonial religion must find, in this our age, a congenial soil, or it could not flourish as it does. In the days when Romanism and Protestantism actively fought in the fields of literature, the learned work was written which we now present to our readers in a modern dress. It indicates a fulness of research among Classical and Catholic authors which is scarcely possible in these over-crowded times of ours, and it provides a rich and abundant storehouse of material for those who would know how to resist the ritual encroachments of our day. The style of composition is antique, and there are allusions to matters which do not nowa-

days receive public expression ; but there are no references which can give needless offence, even when subjects of considerable delicacy have to be treated.

The fact has to be accounted for that Christianity, which, according to its early history and its documents, is characteristically a *spiritual religion*, now shows itself to the world as a *ceremonial religion*, scarcely outrivalled in the elaborateness of its ritual. The questions, therefore, arise, and they are questions of supreme interest and importance : How has this change come about ? On what authority has it been made ? Upon what models has the Christian ceremonial been framed ? And has the change proved to be for the advantage of the Christian nations ?

This work provides what cannot but be thought a very full and complete answer to one, and one only, of these questions. Taking every department of modern ceremonial, it proves, by abundant illustration and on unquestionable authority, that all are copied from heathen models ; that the variations from the heathen models are almost insignificant ; and that the leading teachers of the Roman Church openly avow the sources from which Romish ceremonial has been taken, and argue that authority has been given to the Church to make such adaptations. The ' pope ' is but the ' pontifex maximus ' of paganism ; the orders of ecclesiastics are the same as found in pagan temples ;

the Mass, the processions, the altars, the positions, the robes, the festivals, the saints, the churches, the relics, the images, the prayers for the dead, are so precisely a reproduction of pagan ceremonial that it is only the truth to call modern Romanism and Ritualism a 'christianized paganism.'

Very possibly there are many who think of Christian ceremonialism as only a blending of Jewish ritual with the higher revelation of Christian truth, and that, in this blending, the authority of the Old Testament is preserved for the modern ritual, and the universal desire of men for some *forms*, in which spiritual truth may find outward expression, can wisely be satisfied. This work will convince them of what would be at once, and fully, admitted by both Romanist and Ritualist theologians, that modern ritual is in no sense revived Mosaism, nor is it commended to men on the authority of the Old Testament.

The Romanist and the Ritualist take higher ground; whether it be a safe standing-place that they find is a matter for argument. They say, that the Lord Jesus Christ founded an 'outward and visible Church;' made, first, His Apostles, and then, through them, the bishops, the medium for communicating His will and His grace to men. These as representing the Church have, therefore, authority in all matters that concern the formal setting of the Christian



truth, and the details of the Christian ceremonial. Admit this claim, and men will be indifferent to the sources whence ceremonials may come ; it is enough for them that they are stamped with the approval of the authoritative *Church*.

The Roman and the Protestant positions are, and always must be, 'poles asunder.' The question in dispute between them really concerns the direct administrative headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Has He put His authority into commission? Or does He keep that authority still in His own hands? The Protestant will insist, that the Lord Jesus Christ has never abdicated, or committed in trust to anyone, either His legislative or His executive rights, and, therefore, that every ceremonial must have the stamp of His authority marked on it as plainly as it is marked on the simple ordinance of the 'Supper.' The living will of the living Lord is now revealed to us through the written Word in our hands and the witnessing Spirit in our hearts, and the ministers of the Church have no 'dominion over our faith,' or right to appoint our ceremonials ; they are 'helpers of our joy.' 'One is our Master, even Christ, and *all we are brethren.*'

The subject is, however, too large and too complex to be efficiently discussed within the narrow limits of an Introduction. The one point of it which is treated with great skilfulness, and competent and exact learning, in the work

now before us, is one which will be fresh to many readers, and cannot fail to be interesting to all. It is full of suggestion ; and it will at least excite the gravest suspicion, that *spiritual* Christianity is, in our day, being replaced by an elaborate *ceremonial* ; and it will go far towards convincing us that the origin of almost the whole of the modern ceremonial is to be found, as was the older Romanist ceremonial, in discarded and disgraced *paganism*.



## PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1732.

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THIS tract appears to have been written before the year 1666, at a time when the Edict of Nantes was yet in some force. The author seems carefully to avoid entering into any controversy, though he might then have done it under the protection of that edict ; but it could not have had so universal a perusal as he intended.

The reader will find throughout the whole a mere narrative of those pagan ceremonies which the Christians have, by degrees, introduced into their worship, till they have entirely changed the face of the religion which Christ and His Apostles had left them, into that of the heathens. He cites numbers of authors of the Romish communion who all unanimously own that there hath been no other alteration made in those ceremonies than what relates to the bare name.

Two years ago Doctor Conyers Middleton published a letter from Rome to that purpose. Will any inquisitive

man see from the testimony of a minister of the Church of England the exact conformity there is betwixt popery and paganism, or, in other words, betwixt modern and ancient Rome, let him read that book. I shall only present him here with a few passages therefrom, not contained in this tract, which will show how stupid mankind must have been, and still are, to give credit to such fooleries.

The first of his remarks relates to holy water, and the profits the Romish monks have contrived to draw from it. 'Platina,' says he, 'in his "Lives of the Popes," and other authors, ascribe the institution of this holy water to Pope Alexander the First, who is said to have lived about the year of Christ 113, but it could not be introduced so early, since, for some ages after, we find the primitive fathers speaking of it as a custom purely heathenish, and condemning it as impious and detestable. Justin Martyr says that "it was invented by dæmons, in imitation of the true baptism signified by the prophets, that their votaries might also have their pretended purifications by water." And the Emperor Julian, out of spite to the Christians, used to order the victuals in the markets to be sprinkled with holy water, on purpose either to starve or force them at least to eat what, by their own principles, they esteemed polluted.

'Thus we see what contrary notions the primitive and Romish Church have of this ceremony. The first condemns it as superstitious, abominable, and irreconcilable with

Christianity ; the latter adopts it as highly edifying and applicable to the improvement of Christian piety. The one looks upon it as the contrivance of the devil to delude mankind ; the other, as the security of mankind against the delusions of the devil. But what is still more ridiculous than even the ceremony itself, is to see their learned writers gravely reckoning up the several virtues and benefits derived from the use of it, both to soul and body ; and to crown all, producing a long roll of miracles to attest the certainty of each virtue they ascribe to it. And may we now justly apply to the present people of Rome what was said by the poet of its old inhabitants for the use of this very ceremony ?

“ Ah nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis  
Flumineâ tolli posse putetis aquâ !”

Ovid. “ Fast.,” ii. 45.

Ah, easy fools, to think that a whole flood  
Of water e’er can purge the stain of blood !

‘I do not at present recollect whether the ancients went so far as to apply the use of this holy water to the purifying or blessing their horses, asses, and other cattle, or whether this be an improvement of modern Rome, which has dedicated a yearly festival peculiarly to this service, called in their vulgar language the Benediction of Horses—which is always celebrated, with much solemnity, in the month of January—when all the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood send up their horses, asses, etc., to the convent of St. Anthony, near St. Mary the Great, where a priest in

his surplice at the church door sprinkles with his brush all the animals singly, as they are presented to him, and receives from each owner a gratuity proportionable to his zeal and ability. Amongst the rest, I had my own horses blest at the expense of about eighteen-pence of our money, as well to satisfy my own curiosity as to humour the coachman, who was persuaded, as the common people generally are, that some mischance would befall them within the year if they wanted the benefit of this benediction. Mabillon, in giving an account of this custom, makes no other reflection upon it than that it was new and unusual to him.

‘I have met, indeed, with some hints of a practice, not quite foreign to this, among the ancients, of sprinkling their horses with water in the Circensian Games; but whether this was done out of a superstitious view of inspiring any virtue, or purifying them for those races, which were esteemed sacred, or merely to refresh them under the violence of such an exercise, is not easy to determine; but allowing the Romish priests to have taken the hint from some old custom of paganism, yet this, however, must be granted them, that they alone were capable of cultivating so coarse and barren a piece of superstition into a revenue sufficient for the maintenance of forty or fifty idle monks.’\*

The next has respect to imaginary saints: ‘In reconsecrating the heathen temples to the popish worship—that

\* Pages 18, 19, 20, 21, in quarto, Lond., 1729.

the change might be the less offensive, and the old superstition as little shocked as possible—they generally observed some resemblance of quality and character in the saint they substituted to the old deity. If, in converting the profane worship of the Gentiles, says the describer of modern Rome, to the pure and sacred one of the Church, the faithful used to follow some rule and proportion, they have certainly hit upon it here, in dedicating to the Madonna, or Holy Virgin, the temple formerly sacred to the Bonna Dea or Good Goddess. But they have more frequently on these occasions had regard rather to a similitude of name between the old and new idol. Thus, in a place formerly sacred to Apollo, there now stands the Church of Apollinaris, built there, as they tell us, that the profane name of that deity might be converted into the glorious one of this martyr; and where there anciently stood a temple of Mars, they have erected a church to Martina, with this inscription :

“Martirii gestans virgo Martina coronam,  
Ejecto hinc Martis numine, Templa tenet.”

Mars hence expelled ; Martina, martyr'd maid,  
Claims now the worship which to him was paid.

‘In another place I have taken notice of an altar erected to one St. Baccho, and in the stories of their saints have observed the names of Quirinus, Romula and Redempta, Concordia, Nympha, Mercurius, etc., which, though they may, for anything I know, have been the genuine names of Christian martyrs, yet cannot but give occasion to suspect



that some of them at least have been formed out of a corruption of the old names, and that the adding of a modern termination, or Italianizing the old name of a deity, has given existence to some of their present saints. Thus the corruption of the word Soracte (the old name of a mountain mentioned by Horace, in sight of Rome) has, according to Mr. Addison, added one saint to the Roman Calendar, being now softened, because it begins with an S, into St. Oreste, in whose honour a monastery is founded on the place—a change very natural, if we consider that the title of saint is never written by the Italians at length, but expressed commonly by the single letter S, as S. Oracte; and thus this holy mountain stands now under the protection of a patron whose being and power is just as imaginary as that of its old guardian Apollo.

“Sancti custos Soractis Apollo.”—Virg. *Æn.* 9.

‘No suspicion of this kind will appear extravagant to such as are at all acquainted with the history of popery, which abounds with instances of the grossest forgeries both of saints and relics, which, to the scandal of many, even among themselves, have been imposed for genuine on the poor ignorant people. ’Tis certain that in the earlier ages of Christianity the Christians often made free with the sepulchral stones of heathen monuments, which being ready cut out to their hands, they converted to their own use; and turning downwards the side on which the old

epitaph was engraved, used either to inscribe a new one on the other side or leave it perhaps without any inscription at all, as they are often found in the Catacombs of Rome. Now this one custom has frequently been the occasion of ascribing martyrdom and saintship to persons and names of mere pagans.

‘Mabillon gives a remarkable instance of it in an old stone found on the grave of a Christian with this inscription :

D. M.

JULIA EVODIA

FILIA FECIT.

MATRI.

‘And because in the same grave there was found likewise a glass viol, or lacrymatory vessel, tinged with a reddish colour, which they call blood, and look upon as a certain proof of martyrdom, this Julia Evodia, though undoubtedly a heathen, was presently adopted, both for saint and martyr, on the authority of an inscription that appears evidently to have been one of those above-mentioned, and borrowed from a heathen sepulchre; but whoever the party there buried might have been, whether heathen or Christian, ’tis certain, however, that it could not be this Evodia herself, but her mother only, whose name is not there signified.

‘The same author mentions some original papers he

found in the Barbarin Library, giving a pleasant account of a negotiation between the Spaniards and Pope Urban VIII. in relation to this very subject. The Spaniards, it seems, have a saint held in great reverence in some parts of Spain called Viar, for the farther encouragement of whose worship they solicited the pope to grant some special indulgences to his altars; and upon the pope's desiring to be first better acquainted with his character, and the proofs they had of his saintship, they produced a stone with these antique letters, S. VIAR, which the antiquaries readily saw to be a small fragment of some old Roman inscription, in memory of one who was *prefectus. VIARUM*, or overseer of the highways.

'But we have in England an instance still more ridiculous, of a fictitious saintship, in the case of a certain saint, called Amphybolus; who, according to our monkish historians, was Bishop of the Isle of Man and fellow martyr and disciple of St. Alban; yet the learned Bishop Usher has given good reasons to convince us that he owes the honour of his saintship to a mistaken passage in the old "Acts or Legends of St. Alban," where the Amphybolus mentioned, and since revered as saint and martyr, was nothing more than the cloak which Alban had on at the time of his execution—being a word derived from the Greek, and used to signify a rough shaggy cloak, which ecclesiastical persons usually wore in that age.

'They pretend to show us here two original impressions

of our Saviour's face on two handkerchiefs. The one sent, a present, by himself to Agbarus, Prince of Edessa, who, by letter, had desired a picture of Him; the other given at the time of His execution to a saint or holy woman named Veronica, on a handkerchief, which she had lent him to wipe his face with, on that occasion; both which handkerchiefs are still preserved, as they affirm, and now kept with the utmost reverence; the first in St. Silvester's Church, the second in St. Peter's, where, in honour of this sacred relic, there is a fine altar built by Pope Urban VIII., with a statue of Veronica herself with the following inscription:

SALVATORIS IMAGINEM VERONICÆ

SVDARIO EXCEPTAM

VT LOCI MAIESTAS DECENTER

CVSTODIRET VRBANVS VIII.

PONT. MAX.

MARMOREUM SIGNVM

ET ALTARE ADDIDIT CONDITORIVM

EXTRVXIT ET ORNAVIT.

'But, notwithstanding the authority of this pope and his inscription, this holy woman Veronica (as I have seen it somewhere observed by a writer of their own), like Amphibolus before-mentioned, was not any real person, but an imaginary name only, formed by blundering and confounding the words "vera icon, or the true picture;" which was the title given by old writers to the handkerchief itself.'\*

\* *Ibid*, p. 36 *et seq.*

The next is about miraculous things: 'If we examine the pretended miracles and pious frauds of the Church of Rome,' saith he, 'we shall be able to trace them all from the same source of paganism, and find that the priests of new Rome are not in the least degenerated from their predecessors in the art of imposing on their fellow citizens, by the forgery of those holy impostures, which, as Livy observes of old Rome, 'were always multiplied in proportion to the credulity and disposition of the poor people to swallow them.

'In the early times of the Republic, in the war with the Latins, the Gods Castor and Pollux are said to have appeared on white horses in the Roman army, which by their assistance gained a complete victory; in memory of which the general Posthumius vowed and built a temple publicly to those deities; and for proof of the fact there was shown, we find, in Cicero's time, the marks of the horse's hoofs on a rock at Regillum, where they first appeared.

'Now, this miracle, with many others I could mention of the same kind, has, I dare say, as authentic an attestation as any which the papists can produce: the decree of a senate to confirm it; a temple erected in consequence of it; visible marks of the fact on the spot where it was transacted; and all this supported by the concurrent testimony of the best authors of antiquity; amongst whom Dionysius of Halicarnassus says, that there were subsisting in his time at Rome many evident proofs of its reality, besides a yearly

festival, with a solemn sacrifice and procession in memory of it; yet for all this, these stories were but the jest of men of sense even in the times of heathenism, and seem so extravagant to us now that we wonder there could ever be any so simple as to believe them.

‘What better opinion, then, can we have of all those of the same stamp in the popish legends, which seem plainly to be built on this foundation and copied after this very original? For they show us in many parts of Italy the marks of hands and feet on rocks and stones, said to be effected miraculously by the apparition of some saint or angel on the spot; just as the impression of Hercules’ feet was shown of old on a stone in Scythia, exactly resembling the footsteps of a man. They have many stories likewise of saints and angels fighting visibly for them in their battles against the infidels; with churches and public monuments erected in testimony of such miracles; which, though full as ridiculous as that above-mentioned, are not yet supported by half so good evidence of their reality.

‘Their miraculous images, which we see in all their great towns, said to be made by angels, and sent to them from heaven, are but the old fables revived of the image of Diana dropt from the clouds, or the Palladium of Troy, which, according to old authors, was a wooden statue three cubits long, which fell from heaven.

‘In one of their churches here they show a picture of the Virgin, which, as their writers affirm, was brought down

from heaven with great pomp, and after having hung awhile with surprising lustre in the air, was, in sight of all the clergy and people of Rome, delivered into the hands of Pope John I., who marched out in solemn procession in order to receive this celestial present. And is not this exactly of a piece with the old pagan story of King Numa, when, in this same city, he issued from his palace with priests and people after him, and with public prayer and solemn devotion received the Ancile, or heavenly shield, which, in the sight of all the people of Rome, was sent down to him, with much the same formality, from the clouds? And as that wise prince, for the security of his heavenly present, ordered several others to be made so exactly like it that the original could not be distinguished, so the Romish priests have thence taken the hint to form after each celestial pattern a number of copies so perfectly resembling each other as to occasion endless squabbles among themselves about their several pretensions to the divine original.

‘The rod of Moses, with which he performed his miracles, is still preserved, as they pretend, and shown here with great devotion in one of the principal churches. And just so the rod of Romulus, with which he performed his auguries, was preserved by the priests as a sacred relic in old Rome, and kept with great reverence from being touched or handled by the people; which rod, too, like most of the popish relics, had the testimony of a miracle in proof of its sanctity; for when the temple where it was kept was burnt

to the ground, it was found entire under the ashes, and untouched by the flames, which same miracle has been borrowed and exactly copied by the present Romans in many instances, particularly in a miraculous image of our Saviour in St. John Lateran, which the flames, it seems, had no power over, though the church itself had been twice destroyed by fire.\*

I cannot forbear concluding these with what the same author says: 'As to that celebrated act of popish idolatry—the adoration of the host—I must confess that I cannot find the least resemblance or similitude of it in any part of the pagan worship; and as oft as I have been standing by at Mass, and seen the whole congregation prostrate on the ground, in the humblest posture of adoring, at the elevation of this consecrated piece of bread, I could not help reflecting on a passage of Tully, where, speaking of the absurdity of the heathens in the choice of their Gods: "But was any man," says he, "ever so mad as to take that which he feeds upon for a God?"† This was an extravagance reserved for popery alone; and what an old Roman could not but think too gross for Egyptian idolatry to swallow, is now become the principal part of worship, and the distinguishing article of faith in the creed of modern Rome.‡

From all that has been said, one may easily perceive

\* *Ibid.*, p. 52 *et seq.*

† 'Sed equem tam amantem esse putas, qui illiud, quo vescatur Deum credat esse?'—Cic. de Nat. Deor. 3.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.



why the far greater part of the instructors of men have been so unanimous for discarding reason by their unwearied endeavours to show its insufficiency in matters of religion, whereas that faculty is the only one which distinguishes us from other creatures, and must have been understood to be meant, when in Genesis it is said that God created man after His own image; for what else is there in man which can bear the least resemblance to the idea we have of God? And what other faculty have we capable of guarding us against those senseless impositions which can tend to nothing else but the profit of the inventors and imposers? It were therefore to be wished that those men who, by the appointment or consent of the community, are set apart for instructing the common herd of mankind, and who, when disinterested, are most useful and capable of doing the greatest good, were as solicitous of improving human understanding and showing its excellency as they have been industrious in depreciating it. There have been so many books written of late in defence of it from those attacks, that it were needless to enlarge upon that head.

The great struggle there hath been from the time of the Reformation to our days to get inserted or foisted into the twentieth article this clause: 'The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith.' As it is to be read at large in the 'Historical and Critical Essay on the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England,' it evidently sheweth that those of the clergy who

have been the foremost and the greatest sticklers for this Church authority, had their private interest more at heart than the cure of souls. All the world knows how that very authority which now resides in the Church of Rome is the only prop of that superstition which hath consumed the very essence of morality and religion, and is the greatest cause of the people's ignorance of the solid parts of justice and piety. The same cause must necessarily always produce the same effect, in whatever community it is introduced. Experience teacheth us that the less superstition and the fewer ceremonies any sect have, the members thereof, whether rich or poor, have the more knowledge and a truer sense of the substance of religion and morality. Can we, then, be too careful in guarding against the introduction of ceremonies which are so specious and, in their own nature, insinuating, that when they come once to be entertained, nobody can tell where they will end. Superstition, which hath them for its object, is ever studying to increase them. Therefore this short prayer might not unfitly be added to the Litany : ' From all ceremonies which beget superstition and ignorance, and which sour the mind, Good Lord, deliver us.'

The author of the 'Independent Whig' hath placed superstition and ceremonies in so true and rational a light that the bare perusal of those essays is sufficient to raise an abhorrence of them in the breast of every rational man. His numbers thirty-one and thirty-two treat of ceremonies,

and numbers twenty-seven and thirty-four of superstitious fasting ; where I choose to refer the kind reader.

I cannot better conclude this Preface than with the forty-fourth Persian letter, which shows how few duties are required to render a man acceptable to his maker :

#### USBEK TO RHEDY, AT VENICE.

The generality of the people here are ever disputing about religion ; and yet it looks as if they strove, at the same time, who should least observe it.

Neither are they better Christians, nor even better neighbours, and that is what gives me the greatest concern ; for in whatever religion a man lives, obedience to the laws, the love of mankind, and piety towards parents, are always the foremost acts thereof.

Ought not the first object of a religious man to be to please God, who hath given him the religion which he professes. The means of attaining it is certainly that of observing the rules of society and the duties of humanity ; for in what religion soever a man lives, as soon as one is supposed, we must at the same time think that God loves mankind, since He hath given them a religion to make them happy ; and that, if God loves mankind, one may be certain to please Him, in loving them also ; that is to say, in performing all the duties of charity and humanity towards them, and in forbearing to violate the laws under which they live.

One is much more sure to please God by these means than by the observation of this or that ceremony, for ceremonies have not the least degree of goodness in themselves. They are good with no other regard than as they are supposed to be of God's appointment ; but this is a matter of great dispute, wherein one may easily mistake, for one must choose the ceremonies of one religion from among those of a thousand.

A certain man prayed daily to God to this purpose : Good Lord, I understand nothing about the endless disputes on Thine account. I would gladly serve Thee according to Thy will, but every man I consult will have me serve Thee according to his own will. When I intend to pray, I am at a loss what language I ought to use, neither do I know in what posture to put myself. One tells me I must pray standing ; another will have me pray sitting ; another requires of me that my body should bear upon my knees. This is not all ; there are some who pretend that I must wash myself with cold water ; others tell me Thou wilt look with horror on me unless I get a piece of my flesh cut off. I happened the other day to eat a rabbit in a caravanserai. Three men put me into a vast fright. They maintained that I had grievously offended Thee ; the one because that creature was unclean ;\* another because it was strangled ;† another because it was not fish.‡ A Brahman who passed by that way, whose judgment I

\* A Jew.

† A Turk.

‡ An Armenian.

asked, told me they were all in the wrong, 'for surely,' said he, 'you did not kill that animal yourself?' 'Yes, but I did,' said I. 'Oh, then,' replied he, with a stern countenance, 'you have committed an abominable act which God will never forgive. How can you be sure that your father's soul has not passed into that animal?' All these things, O Lord, cast me into the utmost confusion. I dare not stir my head but I am threatened with offending Thee ; and yet I would please Thee, and employ that whole life I hold from Thee in doing so. I cannot tell if I am mistaken, but I imagine that the best means to attain it is to 'live a good neighbour' in the community wherein Thou hast caused me to be born, and a good 'father of the family' Thou hast given me.

# ROMA VETUS ET RECENS;

OR,

## *A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS RITES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN ROME.*

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### CHAPTER I.

THE OCCASION OF THIS TREATISE.—THE CONFESSION OF  
ADVERSARIES, AND THEIR VAIN PRETENCES.

A TREATISE concerning the original of ceremonies was published some years since, and dedicated to the King of Great Britain, wherein the author shows their rise and admittance into the Church, and by what degrees they passed to superstition.

As this tract, which is pretty curious, hath been so well received by the public as to pass through many editions in a few years, I am of opinion that, in order to satisfy the curious more fully on this subject, it will not be amiss to make a thorough inquiry from whence the greatest part of those ceremonies have been taken. For the popes were not the inventors, but the introducers of them, they only adding some new pageantries in order to disguise them. And one may say, that as Moses made the tabernacle

according to the model which God had showed him on the Mount, so the Bishops of Rome, in the alterations they have brought into religion, have copied after the models of Numa Pompilius and other institutors of paganism. This is owned by all; and many authors, as well Popish as Protestant, have occasionally produced proofs of it. But as this point is very important (to show that it is not without good grounds that the Protestants have lopped off all these vain ceremonies from the Christian worship,\* which is the serving God in spirit and in truth, conformable to the commands of Him who is the Author of it), it will not be amiss to insist thereon, as we proceed, by producing undeniable testimonies of the full agreement there is between the ceremonies which at this day make up the whole devotion of the Church of Rome and those of the ancient heathens. This may serve to undeceive people, and give them a just aversion to all superstitious worship. At least, it will serve to confirm true Christians in the purity of their religious service, and in their contempt of human inventions.

I hope those of the Romish communion will take this writing in good part, since many of their most celebrated doctors are so far from denying the charge that they own and glory in it. 'It is allowable for the Church,' says Cardinal Baronius, 'to transfer to pious uses those ceremonies which the pagans employed impiously to superstitious worship, after they have been purified by consecration; for the devil is the more mortified to see those things turned to the service of Jesus Christ which were instituted for his own.'†

\* John iv. 24.

† Ann. 36.

Polidore Virgil, whom Archbishop Genebrard \* calls a celebrated historian, and whom Baronius compares to a well-learned scribe, who takes out of his treasure things old and new, says that the Church has borrowed several customs from the religion of the Romans and other heathens, but that they have much improved them, and put them to a better use.†

The President Fauchet, in his 'Gallic Antiquities,' dedicated to Henry IV., owns 'that the bishops of that kingdom (employing all their powers to gain over people to Christ) made use of some of the heathen ceremonies, as well as of the stones of their temples, to build churches with.'‡ And the Abbot Marolles, in his 'Memoirs,' employs several pages on that subject: 'One day,' saith he, 'as I was with M. la Feuillade, the Archbishop of Ambrun, an occasion offered to tell him that many of the heathen ceremonies had been sanctified by the piety of our religion. I perceived him much surprised thereat; whereupon I asked audience, which being granted, I gave him so many convincing proofs of it that he could no longer doubt it.'§ Guillaume du Choul, one of the king's council, and bailiff of the Mountains of Dauphiny, wrote a book of the religion of the ancient Romans in the last century, wherein he shows a perfect conformity between old and new Rome with regard to the ceremonies of religion, and concludes in these words, as we may read in his book, printed by authority at Lyons by Guillaume Rouille in the year 1556: 'If

\* Geneb. Chron., Lib. IV., p. 707. (Baron., Tom. IX., Ann. 740.)

† Pol. Virgil, Lib. III., Ch. 1.

‡ Fauchet, Lib. II., Ch. 19.

§ Mem. de Marolles, 2 Part au commencement.)



we examine narrowly,' says he, 'we shall discover that several institutions in our religion have been transferred from the Egyptian and other Gentile ceremonies. Such are the tunics and surplices ; the crowns, or tonsures, of our priests ; bowing round the altar ; the sacrificial pomp ; church music, adorations ; prayers ; supplications ; processions ; litanies, and several other things which our priests use in our mysteries, offering up to an only God, Jesus Christ, what the ignorance of the Gentiles, with their false religion and foolish presumption, offered up to their false deities and to mortal men of their own deifying.\* I will not deny that this evil is very ancient in the Church, since Eusebius, in 'The Life of Constantine,' shows that that great prince, otherwise incomparable for his piety and heroic qualities, began to introduce them. 'This emperor,' saith he, 'to make the Christian religion more plausible to the Gentiles, adopted into it the exterior ornaments which they used in their religion.' Pope Gregory I., surnamed the Great, whom Platina calls the inventor of the whole ecclesiastical service,† followed this method, as may be seen by his instructions (given to a priest called Austin, whom he sent over to England to convert those who professed paganism). 'You must not,' saith he, in a letter he wrote to him, 'destroy the idol-temples, but the idols. Let holy water be made ; let the temples be sprinkled ; let altars be built, and relics deposited in them. If their temples are well built, let them be turned from the service of the devil to that of the true God, to the intent that these heathen

\* Monsieur Drelincourt en a recueilli divers passages en son faux Visage de l'Antiquité.

† Plat. in Vita Gregorii.

people may more readily come to worship in the accustomed places. To those who used to sacrifice oxen to the devil, you must, in lieu thereof, order some other solemnity—viz., that on the day of the dedication, or death of holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they make themselves tabernacles with boughs round the churches into which their temples have been converted, and there celebrate the solemnity by religious banquets, and let them no more slaughter beasts to the devil; but let them kill some for eating, and give thanks to God. Thus some exterior rejoicing must be left them, that they may the readier come into the interior.\*

The conduct which this bishop enjoins his minister is very different from that which God commanded His people, expressly forbidding to consecrate to His service any one of the things which infidels had used in their idolatrous worship, and commanding to destroy them. 'But ye, saith the Lord, shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.'† 'Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And ye shall overthrow all their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.'‡ It is for having zealously obeyed that heavenly command that the piety of Ezechias and Josias, two Kings of Judah, is so much extolled in Holy Writ. For their breaking images (even the brazen serpent, which Moses had made by the

\* Greg. in Regist., Lib. IX., Ep. 71.

† Exod. xxxiv. 13.

‡ Deut. xii. 2, 3.

express command of God) they were not reproached as profane and impious, as the Church of Rome hath stigmatized Constantine V., whom she injuriously calls Iconoclast—*i.e.*, the image-breaker. On the contrary, the Scripture commends them for it, saying: 'They have therein done that which was just before God, and sought after the God of David.\* The blessed Apostles, who laboured with so much pains and success for the conversion of the Gentiles, never once thought of the expedient of conniving at their superstitions to gain them to Christianity, very well knowing, as themselves have taught, 'that they were not to do evil that good might come of it;† that the devil should not be set on the same altar with God, nor Dagon be introduced into His temple. St. Paul calls aloud to the new converts to 'fly from idolatry,‡ and St. John says: 'My little children, keep yourselves from idols.§ For the same reason it was that St. Ambrose praised the zeal of Theodosius, who destroyed the temples of infidels.||

But allowing that the admitting some of the heathen ceremonies into the Christian worship, in order to draw the heathens to embrace Christianity, might have been expedient in past ages, it is not so now, since paganism has been long utterly abolished. To this purpose the learned Rhenanius says, in his 'Notes on Tertullian': 'There was formerly a necessity of granting some things to the Christians, who, being mostly converted from paganism in their old age, were loath to quit those things they had been used to all

\* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, 4.

† Rom. iii. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 14.

§ 1 John v. 21.

|| Theodoret, Hist. Eccles., Lib. V., Cap. 20.

their lifetime ; but it is not so now.\* When a house is building and arches raising, centres and props are made use of ; but they are removed as soon as the building is finished. Let us now put the case that it was then deemed prudence to make use of pagan inventions to forward the work of true religion. Why must they still remain when there are no more infidels to convert ? Let the Jesuits (who, if their own accounts may be depended on, make so great progress in the conversion of the Indians and Japanese) use what artifices they think fit ; let them connive at their ceremonies as much as they please ; let them put three ropes round their necks in honour of an idol they call Parabranne ; let them worship apes, elephants, cows, and oxen ; but let not Christians, who have been converted several ages, be constrained to observe pagan superstitions. It is not to accommodate one's self to the weakness of the ignorant to retain them still ; it is establishing them as a necessary part of the service of God. Surely experience might by this time have made us wise. Experience ought to have taught us the danger of foisting into the service of God the inventions of His enemy. It has often been observed among the learned in their disputes that scruples in matters of ceremonies have made the greatest things miscarry, and that those who are the most obstinately tenacious of these shadows have lost the substance. The same hath happened in the Christian religion. Empty and senseless observations have been preferred to the solid parts of Christianity ; the tares have choked the good grain. Instead of Christians being formed to true piety, they have, like children, been amused with puppets. But this is say-

\* In Lib. de Corona mil.

ing too little, for I might have added (as by the sequel of this discourse it will plainly appear) that instead of sound meat they have been fed with poison. For the evil would be supportable were the question only about things indifferent; as were the scruples of the newly converted Jews, on account of which St. Paul bids 'those who are strong to bear with the weak.'\* But the case being about superstitions invented by the devil, this saying of the same Apostle ought to have been remembered: 'That there is no concord of Christ with Belial, nor any agreement of the temple of God with idols.'† The piety of the primitive Christians deserves our imitation, who, rather than offer a grain of incense on the altars of idols, or wear a crown of bays on their heads, because the heathens wore them for devotion, chose death itself.‡ And though the taking off one's cloak before stones, or sitting after prayer, be things seemingly indifferent, yet Tertullian would not allow the Christians to do them. These things, saith he, ought to be forbidden amongst us, for that very reason because they are performed before idols: 'Propterea in nobis reprehendi meretur, quod apud idolas celebratur.'§ But it is time to hasten to my design.

\* Rom. xv. 1.

† 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16.

‡ Tert. de Corona mil.

§ Tert. Lib. de Orat.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF THE PONTIFEX MAXIMUS, OR SOVEREIGN PONTIFF.

I SHALL begin these parallels with him who is styled the 'Head of the Church.' He is at this time most commonly called pope, which, according to Herodotus,\* is the name the Scythians gave to Jupiter, their principal idol; named sovereign pontiff, as the heathens did the chief priest of their religion. His authority is the same, as well as his appellation. See the description which Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives of the sovereign pontiff of the ancient Romans in his 'Life of Numa.' 'They have,' saith he, 'a sovereign authority in most weighty affairs; for they judge of all causes relating to sacred things as well between private persons as magistrates and the ministers of the gods. They enact new laws by their own authority in cases for which the laws in being do not provide. They examine and have the inspection of all the sacrificers, and in general control all who have the first charge of the ceremonies and sacrifices of the gods; they also see that those who are in the lowest employments perform their duty, to the end they may do nothing against the sacred institutions. They are, moreover, the interpreters and prophets, whom the ignorant people consult about the

\* B. IV., p. 275, ex Edit. Henr. Steph.

service of God and the saints. And if they perceive any so hardy as to disobey their commands, on such they inflict a discretionary punishment, according to the heinousness of the crime. On their parts, they are subject to nobody. They are independent, and not accountable either to the senate or people. When one dies another is chosen in his place, not by the people, but by the sacred college.\* If one did not know that this Greek author (who was contemporary with the Emperor Augustus) speaks here of the sovereign pontiff of the heathens, one would be apt to think he is describing the pope, the picture is so like him. Alex. ab Alexandro adds to it some features taken out of Livy and Plutarch. 'This sovereign pontiff,' saith he, 'was exalted above all the rest. His dignity was as much respected as that of kings. He had his lictors or guards about him, and likewise his ivory chair and litter, as the consuls. He alone had the privilege of ascending the Capitol in a chariot. He presided and ruled in the college of the other pontiffs. The augurs, the priests, the Vestals obeyed him. He had power to chastise and fine them. He governed all sacred things at pleasure. He decreed the kind of sacrifices, and on what altars, to what gods, on what days, in what temples, they were to be offered. He appointed the working and festival days.† Compare this with the authority the pope assumes, and you cannot miss of finding a complete conformity. 'The canonists maintain that the pope is subject to no human laws. That he cannot be judged by the emperor, nor by all the clergy, nor by kings, nor by the people. That it is absolutely necessary to salvation to believe that all creatures are

\* Dion. Italic. Ant. Rom. L. towards the end. See also Titus Liv. in the Life of Numa.

† Genial., Lib. II.

subject to the pope, and that as the sun is said to be the prince of all the planets, so the pope is the father of all dignities.\* Platina, in the 'Life of Paul II.,' acquaints us that he and some others being accused before that pope, they besought him to refer the hearing of their cause to their judges; 'whereupon,' saith he, 'he looked on me with furious eyes, and said, "How dare you talk to me of judges? Know you not that I have all right in my own breast? I have spoke the word. All of you quit the place, and go where you will. I value nobody. I am pope, and have power to enact or approve the acts of others as I please."' Cardinal Baronius, in his 'Remonstrance to the Commonwealth of Venice,' puts this grave interrogatory to them: 'Whence derive you authority to judge the judge of all,† whom not even any councils legally assembled have dared to judge, since it is from him universal councils have derived their authority; so that, without his decrees, they can neither be oecumenical nor universal: they can neither assemble together, nor can the canons therein ordained have any force. Therefore it hath been often said, "The head is judged by nobody."‡ Nothing can be asserted more peremptorily than what Boniface says in the decretal. 'If it be observed,' says he, 'that the pope neglects his salvation, and that of his brethren; that he is inactive and remiss in his doings, etc.; that he leads multitudes of people into the greatest slavery, to be with him eternally buffeted with many torments, let no mortal presume to reprove, or tax him with a crime; for he who

\* Extrav. de Concess., III. præb. C. sed Apost. in Glossa Dist., 19 C.

† Indicem universorium.

‡ Dist. 40, Can. Si Papa.



is to judge all others can be judged by none.' Finally, Cardinal Baronius\* sheweth this conformity, by assigning to the pope all the privileges of the sovereign pontiffs (whom he styles kings of sacred things, augurs), and all other parts of the heathen idolatry ; as to be carried in a coach through the city ; not to uncover his head, or salute anybody ; to be exempted from oaths ; to be clothed in purple, and to wear a golden crown on his head.

It was, as we have already shown, one of the privileges of the pagan sovereign pontiff to appoint the festivals, to make the intercalations, and to regulate the calendars. The pope assumes the same power. It is by virtue of his authority that the breviaries are printed, which set out the year, the four Ember weeks, times for weddings, the epacts, new moons, indictions, fixed and movable feasts, leap years. And as Julius Cæsar, as sovereign pontiff, reformed the calendar, Pope Gregory XIII. did the like in the year 1582, fearing lest the emperor should assume the honour of it.

For many ages the pagan sovereign pontiff did not meddle with secular affairs, but confined his authority to religion only. But Julius Cæsar, and after him Lepidus, having usurped that office, and annexed it to the imperial dignity, Augustus and all his successors continued to hold it, and governed the affairs of religion, as well as those of the state, in an arbitrary manner. This still appears by old coins, ancient monuments, and in their authentic letters, wherein they style themselves 'great pontiffs and sovereign priests : Jul. Cæs. Pont. Max. ; Tiberius Nero, Pont. Max. ; Trajan Imp. Pont. Max. ; Heliogabalus, Summus Sacerdos.' So,

\* Ann. to 3 year, 324, 79.

likewise, the Bishops of Rome, for the first centuries, applied themselves only to the duties of their episcopal office, preaching the Word of God ; teaching the Gospel by word and writing ; administering the sacraments ; visiting the sick ; comforting the afflicted, succouring the poor ; submitting themselves to the magistrates, and acknowledging the emperors for their sovereign lords : but their successors have shaken off the yoke, and, upon a pretended donation of Constantine, assumed a sovereignty over temporals as well as spirituals. They have forsaken the shepherd's crook, to take up an imperial crown, called regnum, glittering with gold and precious stones. As sovereign pontiffs they wear a mitre, and as kings a triple crown. Innocent III. said, in his sermon on the coronation of the pope, 'The Church, who is the spouse, was not married to me without bringing me something. She hath given me an invaluable dowry ; that is, a full power in spirituals and a large one in temporals. For a sign of the spiritual, she hath bestowed on me the mitre ; and the crown as a sign of the temporal. The mitre for the priesthood, and the crown for empire, making me vicar of Him who hath it written on His thigh and vestments, "The Kings of kings and Lord of lords."\*' As the original words of this passage, which were Latin, may be a further satisfaction to the reader, I shall here cite them : 'Ecclesia sponsa non nupsit vacua, sed dotem mihi tribuit obsque precio preciosam, spiritualium plenitudinem, et atitudinem temporalium. In signum spiritualium contulit mihi mitram ; in signum temporalium dedit mihi coronam pro regno : illius me constituens vicarium qui habet in

\* Inn. III. de Coron. Pont., Serm. 3.

vestmentum et fœmore suo scriptum, Rex regum et Dominus dominantium.' It was with an intent to show this double power that Boniface VIII., at the grand Jubilee\* (which he instituted in imitation of the heathens, as will be shown hereafter), appeared on the first day in his pontifical robes, and on the second in his imperial vestments, causing these words to be proclaimed before him: 'Here are two swords,' to intimate that he had a double empire, one over temporals and another over spirituals.

This they have exerted to the utmost when they excommunicated kings, and at the same time interdicted their kingdoms, and absolved their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. From the time of Gregory VII.'s pontificate, nothing is more common than to see kings deposed by the authority of the pontiffs; for, to pass by foreign instances, when Julius II. deprived John II., King of Navarre, great-grandfather of Henry the Great, and gave his kingdom to Ferdinand, King of Spain, he spoke thus to his cardinals in full consistory, as a Spanish historian assures us: 'We must help the King of Spain, and use both swords against the French and Navarian, the common enemies of all good men; and whilst we sharpen the secular knife, we must make the necks of schismatics feel the spiritual.'† For this reason, with common consent of the cardinals, the King of Navarre was declared a schismatic and heretic; because, though he had been frequently admonished, he yet showed himself obdurate, and sided with France. And for these reasons he was deprived of his kingdom and his whole estate; not only himself, but his wife, and children, and

\* In Anno 1511, Extrav. Unam Sanctam de Major et Obed.

† Anton. Nebrissene, Lib. I., Cap. 1, 2, 3.

whole posterity, and their right transferred to Spain. Sixtus V., who came to be pope from a swineherd, expresses himself in no less pompous terms, in the Bull of excommunication he thundered out in the year 1585 against Henry, King of Navarre, and the Prince of Condé.\* For he alleges 'that the authority given to St. Peter and his successors, by the infinite power of the Lord, is superior to that of the kings of the earth; that it was his duty to make the laws to be obeyed, and to punish all transgressors, overthrowing them from their seats, however mighty they be, and crushing them, as the ministers of Satan. He adds, further, that by the duty of his office he was obliged to draw the sword of vengeance against Henry, heretofore King of Navarre, and against Henry, Prince of Condé, the bastard and detestable generation of the illustrious house of Bourbon. Wherefore, being placed in that high seat, and in the full power which the King of kings and Lord of all monarchs had given him, he declares them heretics, apostates, heads, promoters, and public protectors of heresy, and, as such, divests them and their successors of all their lordships, lands, dignities and offices, and pronounces them incapable of succeeding to any principality or kingdom whatever,' etc. Never did the pagan pontiffs, when emperors, speak in so high a strain, or assume so ample an authority, although all the other princes of the earth were subjected to them. The highest point of their power was this, that they disposed of kingdoms, and made and deposed kings. However, herein may be found the conformity betwixt them and the popes; and the fulfilling

\* Mezeray makes mention of this Bull in the Life of Henry III., p. 367.

what is said in the Revelation, 'That the second beast would exercise the full power of the first.\*' But this will more plainly appear by the following parallels. The pagan emperors and pontiffs drew subsidies and tribute from all the provinces of the world. The popes, in like manner, have the money called 'St. Peter's pence,' and all Europe pays them tribute. Those determined the right of fiefs, due to the feudal lord, in case of a change of lord : these have, in like manner, ordered Annates, which make all ecclesiastical lands fiefs of the papal see, and draw the first year's revenue of all benefices newly conferred. Those laid impositions on lewd women, as appears from Suetonius's 'Life of Caligula,' and the 'Apology' of St. Justin. It is well known these do the same at Rome. Those, having conquered a country, obliged the inhabitants to learn the Latin tongue, as a token of their subjection ; these have, in the same manner, compelled all the churches depending on them to perform their service in Latin, as a sign of their dependence. The emperors, by their own authority, allowed anyone to kill all those whose bodies were devoted to the infernal deities.† The pope, in the same manner, gives dispensation to those who are moved with a true zeal for the Catholic religion, to kill all excommunicated persons. The emperors and pagan pontiffs wore clothing and shoes of purple. Their senators were also habited in the same colour. The pope wears the like vestments, and his shoes are the same, as may be seen in the sacred ceremonies.‡ The cardinals who compose his

\* Apoc. xiii. 12.

† Rosin. Antiq. Rom., Lib. I., Ch. xvi., causa 23, qu. 5, cap. Excomm.

‡ Lib. I., vi. 1.

senate (whom Pope Pius II. called senators of the city of Rome) are also clad in purple. If the reader has a mind to see this conformity more at large, he may read what J. Lipsius hath observed in his tract of the Roman grandeur.\*

Whoever has been at Rome on the day of the coronation of a pope, when he is carried in triumph from the palace of the Vatican to the church of St. John de Lateran, and has seen the magnificence of what they call the *cavalcata*, may imagine they have seen the grand triumphs of the Roman emperors. All is then done with at least as much show and ostentation; and as these threw silver and gold by handfuls to the populace, the popes use the like liberality, strewing the streets they pass along with pieces of a new coin, on one side of which is the pope's name and coat of arms, and on the other the images of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The emperors and heathen pontiffs sent to their allies (as acknowledgments of good offices by them done to the Roman empire) an ivory staff, a painted gown, or some such small presents.† The pope imitates them herein, sending to kings and princes, affectionate to his see, sometimes a rose, sometimes gloves, or a consecrated sword, or *Agnus Dei*.

But the most odious conformity is the homage both have required. To those was given the appellation of God. Virgil styles Augustus thus in his first eclogue. And Suetonius, in the 'Life of Domitian,'‡ assures us that emperor arrived to such an excess of arrogance as to require his lieutenants, when they issued out an edict at his command,

\* Lips., l. IV. I. de admir. seu de Magni. Rom.

† Tac. Ann., Lib. VI.

‡ Cap. xiii.

to use therein the words, 'The Lord our God commands it.' It cannot be denied that the pope is so treated: you may read it in Froissard.\* 'As there is but one God in heaven,' says he, 'there cannot, and of right there ought not to be, more than one God on earth.' Pope Nicholas gives himself that appellation in the first part of the decretal: 'It is clearly enough demonstrated that the pope can neither be tied nor loosened by the secular power; as it is evident that the pious Prince Constantine called him God, it is thence manifest that God cannot be judged by men.' Augustin Steuchus, Bishop of Chisanne, and the pope's library-keeper, 'a man,' saith Possevin in 'Aparat,' 'worthy of eternal remembrance, and the true ornament of Italy,' after having cited that canon, insults his adversary, Laurens Valle, and tells him: 'Thou hearest that the sovereign pontiff hath been called God, and held as a God, by Constantine. That, say I, was done when he honoured him with that fine edict, and worshipped him as a God, conferring on him, as much as in him lay, Divine honours.† I omit many more passages which have been mentioned by others, and shall only add that of Du Perron; who, in his letter of thanks to Clement VIII. for his promotion to the dignity of cardinal, flatters him with these words: 'I have ever revered your holiness as a God on earth.' In a word, as the Emperor Julian,‡ surnamed the Apostate, on the medals and coins he had stamped, would always be represented either under the figure of the god Serapis or jointly with Serapis, in like manner the pope would always appear either as a God or as His vicar.

\* Tom. IV. x., Decr. I. Part dist. xcvi. cap. Satis evidenter.

† Aug. Steuchus de Donat. Const. ‡ Baron., Tom. iv. lxxxviii.

The emperors and pagan pontiffs were worshipped, as Aurelius Victor assures us of Diocletian. The same honour is paid to the popes, not only in the conclave immediately after their election, but on many occasions besides, as, among others, at the beginning of the papal Masses, where the cardinals and ambassadors go to pay their obedience, which is styled going to the Adoration. Cardinal du Perron, in the letter above cited, addresses himself to Clement VIII. in these words: 'There are none of those your holiness hath exalted to the sacred dignity of cardinal who embraces, reveres, and adores your holiness with more affection than myself.'

The last excess of the ancient emperor's pride was that some of them have required their feet to be kissed, as Caligula and Heliogabalus, which others of them refused, as an honour which ought not to be rendered to a mortal man. The popes are not so modest, for they have sometimes seen even emperors at their feet. 'When Cæsar,' saith the Book of Sacred Ceremonies, 'comes near the steps of the see, he bends his knee; and when he is come to the feet of the pontiff, he kisses them devoutly, in honour of the Saviour.\*' And in another place of the same book: 'The cardinals invest the new elected pope with the precious scarlet, the cope, and the mitre, adorned with gold and jewels, and make him sit on the altar' (which is the most sublime place of adoration); 'and all come by turns to pay their obedience, kissing his feet, his hands, and mouth.'

Before I close this chapter, I will take notice of a conformity which is somewhat diverting. It is that, as the

\* Cer. Sacr. V., Cap. iii., Lib. I., fo. 8, Venet Edit, 1516, cum Priv. Leon.



pagans, the true descendants of Shem, who exposed his father's nakedness, filled their histories or fables with the crimes of the gods—stigmatizing Saturn as a devourer of his children; Jupiter as a tyrant and ambitious usurper, who had dethroned his father for the sake of empire—an adulterer, incestuous, and a sodomite; Mercury, in the records of the poets, passes for an arrant thief, and Venus for a prostitute—in like manner the greatest devotees of the popes, who speak of them as so many gods on earth, cannot forbear branding them with the blackest and most horrid vices. Genebrard, Archbishop of Aix, one of the most obsequious devotees of the court of Rome, is forced to own, in the thousandth year of his chronicles, that all the popes of that century were monsters. Cardinal Baronius,\* whose devotion to that court was not inferior, could not forbear writing 'that in the see of St. Peter, on the throne of Christ, monsters had intruded, the vilest of men in their lives, entirely lost to all morality, and in all respects abominable.' Cardinal Bellarmin, speaking of John XII., who was deposed by the Emperor Otho, calls him 'the worst of all the popes.'† He could not better express his excessive wickedness. It is much the same as if he had called him, with Platina, 'the most profligate of all men, or, rather, a monster.' Luitprand gives us the particular crimes of which he was convicted in a full council; viz., that he conferred orders on deacons in a stable; that he sold bishoprics to the highest bidders; that he converted the holy palace into a brothel; that he ravished the women who came in devotion to Rome in the very churches of the

\* Baron. in Ann. 897, 4.

† Bell. de Rom. Pont., Lib. II., Cap. xxix.

holy Apostles—widows, married women, or maidens; that he drank the devil's health; that at cards he invoked Jupiter, Venus, and demons; and that, in short, he was slain in the very act of adultery.\* Matthew Paris acquaints us that Hildebrand or Gregory VII. on his deathbed called the cardinals about him and owned that, at the instigation of the devil, he had provoked the wrath of God against mankind. All the ancient historians assert that Sylvester II. was a magician, and that he had sold himself to the devil, on condition he would grant him all his desires: which having for some time obtained, the devil at last tore him to pieces.† Mezeray,‡ a modern historian, and very inveterate against those whom he calls Huguenots, writes thus of the manners of Alexander VI.: 'Never was the sacred tiara so much dishonoured by any man as by this. He had no faith, either for God or man. He trod religion under foot, prostituted honours, and sold all rights, whether Divine or human, to the highest bidder. Whilst he was a cardinal he had, among other mistresses, one named Vannossa, by whom he had four sons. He called his bastards, not nephews, as others did, but sons. He had, besides, a bastard daughter, called Lucretia, to whom he was father. father-in-law, and husband.§ Charles VIII., King of France, being come to Rome, all but two cardinals came about him, telling him that God had brought him there, as by the hand, to undertake the defence of the Church against the violences of Alexander Borgia; who, having obtained

\* Luitp. 2, Lib. VI.

† Sigebert Hermanus Krantzius fasciculus Temporum.

‡ Mezeray in the Life of Charles VIII.

§ Thais Alexandri. filia sponsa nurus.

it by dint of money, perpetrated daily in the Apostles' see the same villainies by means of which he had ascended it : worthy successor, not of St. Peter or St. Paul, but of the traitor Judas or sacrilegious Simon ; rather allied to the Alcoran than the Gospel ; who, with his train of bastards, like a tiger with his whelps, was spotted with all kinds of infamy.' 'This monster, the vilest wretch of that age,' saith the same author (p. 306), 'died of poison, which he intended for Cardinal Adrian, whom he entertained at supper ; the butler, through mistake, filling to the pope out of the bottle in which was the deadly mixture for the cardinal.'

All historians represent that pope in the same execrable light, as they do likewise Julius II., his successor ; for Pius III. is not reckoned, his reign lasting but twenty-seven days. The good king Louis XII. took Julius II. for Antichrist, causing both gold and silver money to be coined with this motto on the reverse : 'Perdam Babylonis Nomen'—*i.e.*, 'I will destroy the name of Babylon.' In a word, as Jupiter dethroned his father, so have popes persecuted and deposed one another. Thus the rage of Stephen VI. against Formosus, his predecessor, was so wild and unbounded that he sought and obtained a decree in council that the body of Formosus should be dug up and despoiled of its pontifical robes, and be interred amongst the laity, and that the two fingers with which he had performed the acts of consecration should be cut off.\* Servius, who came next, had that poor carcase taken up anew and thrown into the Tiber, after cutting off the head.† Twenty-two schisms are reckoned to the year 1378, of which the

\* Platina.

† Lactan., Lib. V., Cap. xx.

greatest (which lasted fifty years) began when one of the popes settled at Rome, the other at Avignon. They thundered out anathemas against each other, and calling one another heretic and Antichrist, took up arms and filled all Europe with blood and confusion.

### CHAPTER III.

OF THE SUNDRY ORDERS OF ECCLESIASTICS, AND THEIR  
REVENUES.—OF THE MONKS, HERMITS, ETC.—OF THEIR  
VOWS, CLOTHING, AND AUSTERITIES.

THE high-priest of the pagans had under him a great number of people consecrated to the service of religion. He had, in the first place, his Grand Sacerdotal College,\* of which his council consisted, and with whom he deliberated on the most important affairs of his office. Upon this model the pope hath his College of Cardinals. Blondus observes this conformity. 'The college,' saith he, 'of the Roman pontiff was composed of five grave priests; in imitation of which, it appears the College of Cardinals of the Church of Rome is composed of three great priesthoods.'† There were, besides the members of this Grand Sacerdotal College, others under the sovereign pontiffs, some of which were called Great, as are now the primates, archbishops, and bishops. There were others inferior, called *curios*, who had each an inspection over a certain district or parish—as are now our curates, whose name is derived from *curiones*. There were, besides these, a vast number of *flamins*—that is, priests who attended the sacrifices—and

\* Livy, Lib. I.

† Blondus, Rom. Trium., Lib. II., p. 31.

such there are, in greater numbers, at this time. The Abbot Marolles acknowledges this conformity. 'To begin with the priestly dignities: is it not true,' saith he (directing his discourse to the Archbishop of Ambrun), 'that the ancient Romans have had their great pontiffs and their inferior priests, such as the flamins, the arch-flamins, salii, luperci, the augurs, and many others, not to omit the Vestals, who, vowing a perpetual chastity, had a very great resemblance with our nuns? And even the name pontiff, is it not derived from the necessity they were under of passing over the bridge Sublicius?''\*

The vestments of the present ecclesiastics have been formed from the pattern of those of the ancient pagans. The crosier, or bishop's staff, is borrowed from the *lituus*, which their pontiff made use of when they performed their sacrifices; and augurs,† when they consulted the flying of birds. The shape of the *lituus*, exactly like the bishop's crosier, is to be seen on the antique marbles or medals. The *amict* or *dominos* of the bishops also came from thence; for the pagan pontiff never made any sacrifice without his head being covered with an *amict*, which they called in Latin *orarium* or *superhumerales*.‡ They wore also an *albe*,§ as the priests do when they go to say Mass; and the flamins wore a gown made like the cope our priests wear in the churches, saith Du Verdier in his Lessons.|| *Stola* is in imitation of that which was put on the back of those victims which were led to the altar. The *pelt*, which the canons wear with the fur outward, came from the

\* Mem. de Mar.

† Livy, Lib. I.

‡ Plutarch. in Ant.

§ Fenestella, Cap. v.

|| Lib. II., Cap. iv., p. 89.

custom of the pagan *victimarii*—that is, of those who killed the beasts in sacrifice, who took their skins and put them over their heads, with the fur outward. We have for this conformity of vestments the authority of a cardinal and an abbot. ‘Cardinal Baronius,’ saith Marolles in his ‘Memoirs,’ ‘hath observed on the 44th year of our Lord, that the ancient pagans wore the surplice and the pastoral staff, called *lituus* ; that they used the ring and mitre ; that the flamins, or priests who sacrificed, were clothed with a vest of fine linen, called by the Latins *alba vestis*. And Juvenal in his sixth satire asserts that the great priest of Anubis, surrounded with a crowd of other priests, clothed in fine linen, with a bald head, deserves the first rank and supreme honour above others.’

The revenues of the clergy arise from the same spring with those of the pagan sacrificers. For these had in the first place the offertory—that is, the offering which the devotees offered to the gods, which they carried away for their own use ; but whereas these offerings were only casual, that there might therefore be a settled fund, Numa Pompilius made a foundation of a public revenue for the maintenance of the pontiffs, augurs, salii, feciales, curiones, or curates, Vestals, and generally for all those who attended on religion.\* In imitation of him many private persons consecrated their estates to the same use, so that there were rich benefices by foundation. And these benefices were, as now they are, some at the presentation and collation of the prince, or of the senate, or of the College of Pontiffs ; others at the presentation of private men,†

\* Blondus, Rom. Trium., Lib. II. imit.

† Tit. Liv., l. ix.; Cic. de Leg., l. i.

who had the right of patronage, whether they themselves or their predecessors founded them. There were then, as there are now, abuses committed; the sovereign pontiff granting license for one person to enjoy two benefices, for Livy\* assures us that Fabius Maximus had that privilege. The third spring of the pagan clergy's revenues, and particularly those of the sovereign pontiffs, was the *annates*; that is to say, the first-fruits of the vacant benefices, which they either gave, sold, or bestowed. The fourth arose from *obits*, anniversaries, legacies, and donations made by the wills of those who desired that sacrifices and prayers should be offered to the gods for the repose of their souls; which is verified in our days by the monuments and the sepulchres of the ancient idolaters.† In a word, they had the fines, condemnations, and confiscations which the high-priest caused to be decreed to them, as may be found by what happened to Cicero, whose house and other estates, after his banishment, were confiscated, and given to the College of Priests, and the revenues thereof consecrated to the maintenance of sacrifices in the temple of the goddess Liberty. All the world sees that the clergy of our days have heaped up vast riches, and daily increase them by the same means. The liberality of our kings, and more particularly that of Charlemagne and of Pepin, hath laid the foundation of their treasure. 'The kings and emperors' (saith Du Choul, towards the latter part of his book) 'made gifts, like those we now call royal foundations, and of which the priests received the rents by the hands of col-

\* Tit. Liv., Lib. XXX., Suet. in Claudio.

† See the inscriptions collected from the old marble monuments in Blondus, Rom. Trium., Lib. II., p. 33.



lectors, as now our priests do from the receivers of the domain.' Besides this spring, which never dries up, there daily fall masses, obits, anniversaries, dispensations, plurality of benefices, vacancies, deposits, offerings, fines, confiscations, and such-like revenues, which, as so many rivulets, serve to maintain the grand stream of treasure.

The heathens, besides their high-priests, their priests, their curates, and others, which were invested with the care of religion, had sundry convents or societies of religious men and women, who took upon them the name of the god or saint to whom they devoted themselves, and whose rule they observed. One was called Quirinals, from Quirinus or Romulus ; the others, Diales, from Jupiter ; Martiales, from Mars ; Vulcanales, from Vulcan ; Vultur-nales, Florales, Pomonales. There were religious men of the society of Augustus, brothers of Hadrian's society, of Antoninus's, of Aurelius's. 'They called one another brother,' saith Alexander of Alexandria,\* 'because they were united together by a reciprocal charity and covenant. They called one another companions, by reason they were all equals, and joined in one fellowship.' Is not the same thing seen in our days, in the many orders of religious of both sexes? Some take the name of Jesus, as the Jesuits. Some take the name of men, whose rule they follow ; as the Augustins, so called from Augustin ; Benedictins, from Bennet ; Franciscans, from Francis ; Dominicans, from Dominic ; and Celestins, from Celestin. This cannot have been done in imitation of the primitive Christians, for they never called themselves Johnians, Paulins, nor Barnabites, from John, Paul, or Barnabas ;

\* Alex. ab Alexd. Genial, Lib. I., Cap. xxvi.

neither by the order of the Apostles ; for when it happened at Corinth that one said, I am of Paul ; another, I am of Apollos, St. Paul censured them for it. ‘ Who is Paul ? and who is Apollos ? saying further, One planteth, another watereth, but God gives the increase,’ etc. But herein the Christians have followed the footsteps of the heathens, as is owned by Polidore Virgil.\* After mentioning the sundry religious societies of the pagans, he saith : ‘ From hence I dare affirm, without hesitation, that our popes, who have always studied to draw men—especially the Romans—from those vain societies to a manner of living more pure and more certain, by an establishment more holy, have induced men to form societies, which are not only very numerous throughout the earth, but daily increasing.’

Of the friars among the Romans, some had revenues, as those called the Brethren of the Country, who were instituted by Romulus ; the Quirinals and Vestals, of whom Livy saith : ‘ That Numa Pompilius having founded them, he settled for them a revenue on the public.’† The others were mendicants, as the Friars of the Great Mother of the Gods, ‘ who going through the roads and streets,’ as St. Austin saith, ‘ exacted from the people that whereupon they lived shamefully.’‡ Apuleius makes a pleasant description of them under the name of his ‘ Golden Ass,’ and exposes their cheats, rogueries and hypocrisies, by assuring us how, under the pretence of devotion, ‘ they laid up money, casks of wine, milk, cheese, wheat, barley, roots, etc., with the utmost avarice, putting all that was given them in bags, which they carried with them for that

\* Pol. Virgil de Invent. Rerum, Lib. VII., Cap. vi.

† Tit. Liv., Lib. I.

‡ Aug. de civit. Dei, Lib. VII., Cap. vi.

purpose, and thus strolling about, they plundered the country.\* Lucian, in his treatise of the 'Goddess of Syria,' makes also mention of them. 'None else were permitted to beg, the Roman laws prohibiting it all others; because,' saith Cicero, 'it fills the mind with superstition and exhausts families.' In the Romish Church there are, as all the world knows, two sorts of monks: some are rich and have great revenues—such are at Paris, the friars of St. Victor, those of St. Germain, of St. Genevieve, and the Celestins; the others, professors of beggary, as the four mendicant orders. Polidore Virgil, as good a Roman Catholic as he was, could not forbear comparing them to the priests of the Great Mother of the Gods.† 'Posterity,' saith he, 'rather retains the bad institution than the good. This appears in many things, and especially in the artifice of the ambulant mendicants. There were, among the ancients, a sect of people who, under the pretext of religion, strolled from province to province, getting money or other things. These carried with them images of their gods, giving the people to understand that the gods would be propitious to those who gave, or would give, them something. There is at this time a sect of cheats, enemies to labour, the more inwardly dissolute, as they endeavour to show outward sanctity, perfect imitators of the goddess's priests, who, with a fraudulent piety—calling themselves the servants of all the saints, fully trained up to all kinds of imposture—go rambling round the towns and villages, begging of the easy countrymen: some, for the building of a church; others, for buying clothes; others, for food for the poor; others, for

\* *Metamorph.*, Lib. VIII.† *Pol. Virg.*, Lib. VII., Cap. vii.

the redemption of captives ; some, again, for the bringing up of foundling children. By these means they get from one a sheep ; from another, wool ; a lamb from others ; a hen and eggs from others ; from one, a hog or gammon ; and from another, cheese or flax, etc. And, the better to deceive, they draw out of a box the relics of saints, or apostolic letters, or signatures, worn out with age and handling often, and offer them with great veneration to kiss, to those who give them something, promising, as a recompense of their gifts, eternal life.' Ludovicus Vives, in his commentaries on St. Austin's treatise of the 'City of God,' where that doctor speaks of the begging priests of the Mother of the Gods, exclaims thus : 'What would St. Austin now say, should he see, in our days, rich and opulent societies begging alms of those to whom they ought rather to give of that which they abound in, and are gorged with ? The giver nibbles dry and brown bread, and finds nothing but herbage on his table, and water in his earthen vessels. He is surrounded with many children, for whom he labours day and night with continual anxiety. But the rich beggar, who receives, fills himself with white bread, with partridges and capons, and drinks the best of wines.'\*

The clothing of the monks being different from that of the common people, is a similar affectation with the ancient Greek philosophers, who endeavoured to be distinguished by their long beards and long cloaks. 'Had they not different habits,' saith Bellarmin, 'they could not be known from others.'† Socrates, in his 'Ecclesiastical History,' tells us that Eustatius the heretic was the introducer of these superstitious habits amongst the Christians, in imita-

\* Lib. VII., Cap. vi.

† Bella de Mon., Lib. II., Cap. xl.

tion of the heathen philosophers.\* He wore the habit of a philosopher,' saith he, 'and obliged his followers to wear clothes of an uncommon fashion.' Would you know the make of those clothes and their conformity with those of our monks, read the description St. Hierom makes of them. You have the verbal translation of it in his epistle to Eustatius: 'Let not your clothes,' says he, 'be too much affected or too sordid. Let them not be remarkable by any variety, that people may not stand to gaze and point at you,' etc. And a little lower: 'Some there are who affect a dejected countenance, that the world may take notice that they fast; who, when they are looked on, sigh, cast down their eyes, cover their faces, and scarce leave room for one eye to see. They wear black vestments with a girdle of sackcloth; they affect to have dirty hands and feet; their belly alone, because that cannot be seen, is at full ease, etc. Some there are who clothe themselves with hair shirts; with cauls artfully made, to affect childish innocence. Thus accoutred, you would take them for owls or buzzards.' Is not this a pleasant description of the monkish clothes? You cannot but observe that those people clothe themselves with those monks' clothes to show they are returning to childhood. This is the very mystery our modern monks contemplate in their caul. 'The caul,' saith Bellarmin, 'showeth the childish simplicity to which the monks desire to return, for sucking children have their heads covered with some veils as with a caul.'† After St. Hierom hath thus described the dress of the superstitious women of his

\* Socrates, Lib. II., Cap. xxxiii.; Hierom ad Bella, pp. 49, 50, Tom. I.

† Bell., *Ibid.*

time, he passes to that of the men. 'That it may not be imagined,' says he, 'that I dispute with women alone, I in like manner shun those men whom you find girt round with chains, who have goats' beards, black cloaks, and bare feet, enduring the cold. All these are arguments of the devil. Such was once Anthony; such was Sempronius at Rome, whom he made to suffer. These people, making their ways into noblemen's houses, abuse the women; and being loaded with sins, make show of a dejected countenance and feign a long fast, whilst they secretly fill themselves with meat and drink in the night-time.' You have here a true picture of our modern monks, who, as well as those of St. Hierom's time, have formed themselves after the model of the pagan philosophers. Had the painters read this passage, they would not, as usual, represent St. Hierom with a caul, a goat's beard, and bare feet; for there is not the least appearance that he would reprove in others things he found in himself. I will add to what I have now said what Minucius Felix relates of some devotees amongst the heathens. 'They go barefoot in winter,' saith he, 'and wear extravagant head-coverings.' Is not this the true equipage of our Capuchins? All the rules of their convents, their vows and their austerities, are but, as the rest, an imitation of paganism. Such is the silence so much recommended by all the founders of religious orders, and which is most strictly observed by the Carthusians, who pass almost all their lifetime without speaking. When they go forth from their cells and eat all together at the same table, they dare not speak with those they sit next, nor even look on them. One would be apt to think that they became mute from the fish they commonly feed upon. All this comes from the

school of Pythagoras, who taught that silence was something divine, and who enjoined his disciples religiously to observe it for five years.\* Perhaps the pope has taken out of that school the putting his hand on the mouths of the cardinals newly promoted, at their first meeting, to teach them to keep silence.

The vow of poverty flows from the same source, for there is no appearance of it, either from the example of the first saints in Holy Writ, or in the conduct of the faithful in the first ages of Christianity; but in that of the heathen philosophers, 'who,' as Lactantius affirms, 'threw up their estates and renounced all pleasures, that so, being naked and disburthened, they might follow naked Virtue.'† Thus did Antisthenes, who, selling all he had, distributed it publicly, reserving to himself nothing but a cloak.‡ Diogenes, his disciple, did the same; for, that he might attend his meditations without any impediment, he forsook all he had, except a wallet, a cup, and a staff.§ Thus Crates, as St. Hierom relates, going to Athens to attend the study of philosophy, threw into the sea a great sum of gold, thinking it impossible to possess riches and virtue at the same time.|| All the world knows the excessive praises the Stoics gave to poverty, and the advantages that resulted from it. 'Would you,' saith Seneca to his dear Lucilius, 'fill your mind with fine conceptions? Be poor, or live as if you were so; let your bed be of straw, your clothes of hair-cloth, and your food brown bread.'¶ Bating the brown

\* Diogen. Laert. in vita Pythag. Lib. Cerem.

† Lacta., Lib. I., Cap. i.

‡ Hier. adv. Jovin., Lib. II.

§ Diogenes Laert.

|| Hier., Ep. xiii., ad Paulin.

¶ Seneca, Epist. xvii. 2 and 18, 2 and passim.

bread, one would take this to be an old Capuchin tutoring a novice. He adds : ' Let us make ourselves familiar betimes with poverty. When we shall have found how supportable a thing it is to be poor, we shall be rich with the less anxiety. He alone is worthy of God who can despise riches.' There is this further conformity betwixt this philosopher and the monks, that as Seneca spoke in praise of poverty in the midst of affluence, in like manner do these make vow of a feigned poverty, which doth not deprive them of the necessities of life. They may very well say, with the parasite in Terence : ' *Omnia habeo, neque quicquam habeo. Cum nihil est, nihil desit tamen*' (I possess all things, though I have nothing. I have nothing, and yet do not want).\* The first imitators of the Stoics were the Essenes among the Jews, whom Pliny† calls a solitary society, without women or money ; then the Manichees among the Christians (if they may be reckoned such), for they boasted, as St. Austin assures us, ' to have cast off from them gold and silver ; not to carry money in their girdles ; to content themselves with living from one day to another ; not to take care for to-morrow, and never to torment themselves about what their bellies should be filled with, or their backs be clothed.'‡ These were, as everyone may discover, the patriarchs of the mendicant monks, who, by their vows, engage themselves in the curse which David wished to his enemy : ' Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg ; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.'§

\* Ter. in Eunuch.

† Plin. Hist. Nat., Lib. V., Cap. xvii.

‡ Aust. Cont. Faust., Lib. V., Cap. i.      § Psalm cix. 10.



Celibacy is of no better extraction. Everyone knows in what esteem it was among the heathen philosophers. St. Hierom relates that in his time the first ministers of religion among the Athenians, called Hierophantes, used to drink the infusion of hemlock to make themselves impotent, and that as soon as they were raised to the pontificate they ceased to be men.\* The same St. Hierom introduces a Stoic, giving an account of the Egyptian priests, who saith 'that they never mix with women from the time they had embraced the service of the divinity ; and that, in order to extinguish the flame of lust, they entirely abstained from flesh and from wine.' The priests of the Great Mother of the Gods drank of the river of Phrygia, which put them into such a frenzy that they castrated themselves, from whence they were called *semi-viri*, half-men.† The devil, who delights in pollution, banished chaste marriage from his profane altars, because it is the only remedy God hath appointed against incontinency. This evil has from thence crept first into the Jewish Church, where the Essenes abstained from wedlock, as Josephus and Pliny testify.‡ They said that in their society none were born, notwithstanding which (a thing incredible) it had subsisted many ages. And the same has happened in the Christian Church, in order to fulfil the prediction of St. Paul in his first to Timothy.§ We see at this present time that which Minucius Felix reproached the heathens, his contemporaries, with : 'Some

\* Hier., Lib. II., adv. Jovin.

† Du Choul's Of the Religion of the Ancient Romans, p. 269.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. ; Joseph. Antiq., Lib. XVIII., Cap. ii. ; Plin. Hist. Nat., Lib. V., Cap. xvii.

§ 1 Tim. iv. 3.

temples locked up from women, and others the entrance whereof is forbidden to men.'

The abstaining from meats is also a pure imitation of the pagans. 'The Brahmins in India,' saith Du Choul, 'admitted none into their order but such as would forbear eating flesh or drinking wine.' Seneca assures us that Epicurus fasted on certain days. 'Epicurus,' saith he, 'who was so thorough a proficient in voluptuousness that he read lectures on it, passed certain days without breaking his fast or laying out one penny for his repast.' The Egyptians were no sooner initiated than they abstained ever after from flesh and wine. They eat neither eggs nor milk; calling eggs a liquid flesh, and milk blood of another colour. They slept on the ground, having palm-leaves for their beds and a bench for a pillow; and they were two or three days together without taking the least sustenance. The Gymnosophists of India lived altogether on apples, rice, and flower of wheat. The priests of Jupiter, in the island of Crete, now called Candia, abstained from flesh and all cooked meats. The priests of Eleusina observed strictly three things commanded them by Triptolemus: The first, to honour their father and mother; the second, to worship and revere the gods; and the third, not to eat flesh. You may read this in St. Hierom.\* To which I will add what De Marolles saith in his 'Memoirs': 'The heathens fasted to appease the anger of the gods; witness this line of Horace—"Mane, die quo tu indicis Jejunia."' We read of Numa that, when 'he came to pray for the corn, he abstained from eating flesh, and was advised by the senate, as Livy in his 35th book says, that it was necessary to

\* Hier. adv. Jovin., Lib. II.

appoint a fast in honour of the goddess Ceres.' One may observe from these passages that the abstaining from certain meats (wherein the Church of Rome makes the holiness and merit of fasting to consist) is a superstition taken from the heathens.

From thence, also, are derived the scourgings and austerities of the Capuchins, of the Penitents, and the Flagellating Brotherhood. He who was a murderer from the beginning hath taken delight in anticipating the torments of mankind. Whatever superstition may now do, it exercises on its slaves no other cruelty than in ages past. The hair-cloth and the stripes, which are in our days valued at so high a rate, are no other than the customs of the priests of Bellona, who drew blood, which they received in their hands to sprinkle it on that idol, as Tertullian relates.\* That author also acquaints us that, in his time, there was a festival at Lacedæmon called Flagellation Day; on which they used to scourge in a most cruel manner, before the altar, five young men, chosen from among the nobility, and in the presence of their fathers, who exhorted them to suffer with constancy. A monk who scourges himself till he is all over bloody, before an image or an altar, gains by so doing the reputation of a saint.† But did not the priests of Baal with more reason deserve canonization, who made incisions in their flesh with knives or lancets, before the altar of their idol, till the blood gushed out?‡ Even those who beat their breasts with stones do no more than the poor man possessed, of whom St. Mark§ acquaints us 'that the evil spirit tormented him so much

\* Tert. Apo., Cap. ix.

† 1 Kings xviii.

† *Ibid.* ad Mart.

§ Chap. v.

that he beat himself with stones.' So that one may very well call these voluntary penances diabolical. 'How!' saith Minucius Felix to the pagans. 'You make effusion of your own blood before the gods! You invoke them with the orifices of your wounds! It were much better for you to be profane than devout in this manner! Who sees not that they who commit these follies are disturbed in their senses?' And in another place: 'These are not mysteries, but butcheries.'

As to the origin of Penitents, such as are seen in Spain and Italy (especially in the week they call 'Holy') to walk the streets, scourging their shoulders, some with chains, and others with hooks, Polidore Virgil derives it from the Romans and Egyptians.\* 'Those,' saith he, 'whom you see in the public processions walk in order, with their faces covered and their shoulders torn, which they scourge with whips, as becomes true penitents, have copied after the Romans, who, when they celebrated the feast called Lupercal, marched thus naked and masked through the streets with whips. And if we must go farther to look for the origin of this verberation, I will affirm it to be derived from the Egyptians, who, as Herodotus tells us, 'used to sacrifice, with much solemnity, a cow to the great devil, and, whilst the sacrifice was burning, whipped themselves with rods.'†

The austere and wild life of the hermits is, in the same manner, an imitation of the pagans. I know very well that some Christians, having been forced to fly to the deserts to avoid persecution, have insensibly accustomed themselves

\* Pol. Vir., Lib. VII., Cap. vi.

† Herod. Euterpe. See Mr. du Moulin's Capuchin, pp. 31 and 32.

to that kind of life, as Paul the Hermit, of whom Hierom writes, that 'whilst the tempest of persecution raged, he retired to mountains and desert places; and, as he there waited to see an end of persecution, he turned the necessity into choice.\* But the Christians did not commonly do so. They lived in society; and as to the things of social life, they conformed to the customs of the places they lived in. From the hypochondriacal humour of the philosophers is derived the love of solitude and deserts. 'We live among you,' saith Tertullian to the pagans; 'we eat the same meats and use the same clothing; we have been brought up in the same manner, and have the necessaries of life in common; for we are not like the Brahmins or Gymnosophists of India; we do not retire into woods, nor abstain from the necessaries of life; we do not cast away any of the good things which the providence of God hath produced for our use; we live with you in the world, and do not separate from the common intercourse of society.† These Gymnosophists, of whom he speaks, were a sect of bigots or hermits, who lived in the most retired parts of the woods and mountains, in a wonderful austerity, according to St. Austin's description of them. 'They abstained from women,' saith he, 'and philosophized stark naked in the solitudes of India, from the rising to the setting of the sun; they fixed their eyes on the sun, without moving them; they stood a whole day on the one or the other foot, on sands heated by the sun; they endured, without showing any sign of pain, the coldness of the snow.'‡ One may with truth call the philosopher Diogenes the Dog, as he was sur-

\* Hier. Vita Pauli Eremitæ.

† Apol., Cap. xlii.

‡ Aust., Lib. XV., de Civ. Dei; Plin., Lib. VI., Hist. Nat., Cap. ii.

named, whose manner of life was very severe.\* For a house he had a tub ; for his covering by day and by night, nothing more than his cloak ; his wallet was his granary and cupboard, and the palm of his hand his bottle and cup ; he lived upon alms. During the most scorching heat of summer he would lay himself down on the hot gravel or beach of the sea ; and in the greatest frost in winter he would, with his naked body, embrace stone statues covered with snow. In this he was imitated by St. Francis, of whom the legend saith, 'that when he was tempted with carnality, he would take off his clothes and cast himself naked on the snow, making balls which he applied to his body, and calling them his wife and his maid.'

Those who know the economy of convents, and the secret punishments imposed there on the brothers who have committed some great fault, may perceive, if they have read Plutarch's 'Life of Numa,' that the Vestals who had wronged their honour were used in the same manner ; that is, they were let down into dungeons, the mouths of which being stopped up, they were there left to starve to death.

It is on the model of those ancient Vestals that the convents of virgins, whom they call nuns, and who make a vow of celibacy, have been instituted, as Du Choul owns.† 'To enter into the Vestals' temple,' says he, 'was interdicted to the men, as it is to enter into the convents of our nuns which are reformed. The chief of the vestals was called "Maxima," as among our nuns, the "Abbess." Their duty was to keep the sacred fire always lighted ; and if it went out by accident they were punished by the high

\* Diogenes Laert.

† Page 216.

pontiff; although it was yearly lighted up anew by the Vestals, as to this day is done on the consecration of the Easter taper.'

In fine, the tonsure of the priests and monks of our days is an imitation of the ancient priests of Isis, whose heads were shaved, as you read in Apuleius.\* St. Epiphanius also testifies that the priests of Serapis at Athens were shaved.† This ceremony is very ancient among the pagans, since God made an ordinance (Levit. xxi.), which is repeated (Ezek. xlv. 20), where the priests and Levites are forbid 'to shave their heads in a round;' for such is properly the signification of the Hebrew word, as Rabbi Solomon, according to Buxtorf, hath remarked.‡ But the imitation of the Gentiles hath been preferred to the command of God. The Abbot Marolles owns the source of that custom, when he saith: 'We learn from Herodotus and Pliny that the priests had their heads shaved after the manner of the Egyptians. And the Emperor Commodus, if Lampridius speak truth, had his hair cut off, to offer it up to the image of Anubis.'

\* Apul. in *Asino Aureo*.

† Epiph. *Her.*, 64.

‡ In his *Mem.*, p. 210.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE MASS, AND THE CEREMONIES DEPENDING THEREON.

As of old, among the Greeks, when the ceremonies of worship to Isis were concluded, the people were dismissed by two Greek words, signifying their discharge, so the Romans, in imitation of them, when their devotions were over, discharged the people with the words 'Ite,' 'Missio est,' or 'Licet,' as may be seen in Apuleius.\* From *missio*, by corruption, is come *missa*, Mass. 'From thence,' says Polidore Virgil' (*i.e.*, from the sacrifices to Isis and from those of the Romans), 'is derived the custom of our people, after the celebration of the sacred things, to make the deacon say, "Ite, missa est;" *i.e.*, Every one is now at liberty to depart.'

It is believed in the Romish Church that the Host (which is made of wheat flour) is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men, and that by the offering which is made of it God is appeased, and rendered propitious.† This belief is the heart and soul of the Romish Church. Whoever holds it is a good Catholic, and whoever doubts it is not a good Christian. 'It is the centre of all spiritual exercises,' saith the author of the 'Introduction to Civil Devotion,' 'the

\* Apul., Lib. II., De Asino Aureo.

† Cath. of the Counc. of Trent de Missa Sacra.



sum of a devout life, the sacrament, to which all others pay homage ; the unbloody sacrifice, the completion of all others ; the sea, from which all graces flow ; the end of all devotion, the most excellent homage the earth can pay to heaven, or the creature to his Creator ; the greatest of all imaginable actions ;\* the most sublime oblation which can be offered to the Eternal Father.† Yet this sacrifice, so holy and so wonderful, is altogether of pagan invention. Let none be offended at this, for I may very safely assert it, after an abbot‡ who is still of the Romish Church, and whose book has been printed at Paris, with license ; he not only says it, but maintains it with formal proofs very clear and positive. He mentions Tibullus, where he says that the Deity is appeased with the sacred bread, *Farre pio*, and Plautus, in his *‘Amphitryo,’* where *Sofia* tells his mistress that she ought to have paid her devotion to Jupiter, with offering the salted cake, with incense : *‘Jovi, aut molâ falsâ bodie aut Thure comprecatur oportuit.’*§ Virgil, in his fifth *Æneid*, says that reverence was paid to *Vesta* with sacred wheat : *‘Vesta farre pio et plena supplex veneratur acerra.’*|| He adds, farther, that these words of Horace amount to the same thing—*‘farre pio et paliente mica ;’* and that Tibullus, in his panegyric to *Messala*, writes that a small cake or morsel of bread appeases the gods : *‘Parvaque cœlestes pacavit mica.’*¶ About two hundred years ago a learned Neapolitan made that remark : *‘’Twas Alexander of Alex-*

\* Cath. of the Counc. of Trent de *Missa Sacra*, Ch. ii.

† *Acheminement à la Devotion Civile*, Lib. III., Ch. i.

‡ Id., Ch. iii.

§ Lib. III., Ch. i.

|| *Maroles Mem.*, Part I., p. 215.

¶ Lib. III., *Eleg.* 4.

andria who writes that Numa Pompilius was the first who instituted the unbloody sacrifices, ordering that no sacrifice should be made without new meal.\* And that Pythagoras was of opinion that nothing which had life should be offered up to the gods; and only meal should be used; and that this was an imitation of the custom of the Egyptians, who appeased their god Serapis, not with the slaughter of beasts, but with hosties of bread—paneficiis.' You are desired to take notice that the term 'immolare,' which signifies to sacrifice, is drawn from the word 'mola,' the name the pagans gave to those little round loaves which they offered up to their gods. I say small round loaves, for from them also the form of the hosties is derived, as Du Choul himself owns.† 'I have observed,' saith he, 'the Romans used to eat, standing in the temples, little round pieces of bread, which they did in honour of the gods, as is done at the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, in the great church at Lyons.'

The priests, before they celebrate Mass, ought to wash their hands. This is the express order of the ritual, which saith: 'Sacerdos, sanctum Eucharistum administraturus, procedat ad altare, lotis prius manibus' (*i.e.*, The priest who is to administer the Eucharist must wash his hands before he approaches the altar). The pagan sacrificers were obliged to observe the same thing before they performed the service. 'The ancients,' saith Eustathius on Homer, 'wash their hands before they sacrifice.' Hesiod forbids offering up wine to Jupiter before the hands were washed.‡ And

\* Alex. ab Alexandri Genial dierum, Lib. II., Ch. xxii., at the beginning.

† Page 302.

‡ Hesiod, Lib. opera et Dierum.

Virgil acquaints us that Æneas durst not touch the gods, which he intended to save from the sacking of Troy, before he had washed himself: 'Donec me flumine vivo, abluero.'\*

It was the custom of the priests of old Rome to confess themselves before they approached the altar to offer sacrifices, and to ask pardon of the gods and goddesses, and of the saints, requiring of them things just and reasonable — as Pythagoras declares in his golden verses, and Orpheus in his hymns. This Numa Pompilius ordered should be observed among the Romans, holding that the sacrifice could not be duly celebrated unless the priest had purged his conscience by confession. This is practised in our days by the priests before they say Mass. Du Choul has remarked this conformity. 'It was the custom among the Romans,' says he, 'that whoever was to celebrate Divine things, in order to purge his conscience, confessed he had sinned; which were the first words used at their sacrifices. As in our religion, confession goes before the Divine acts. For the custom of the sacrificers, before they sacrificed, was to confess themselves.'†

Numa Pompilius ordered that the sacrificing priests should be clothed in white.‡ This vestment was called alba, and in our days albe, worn by the priest who says Mass. Over the albe he ordered that the sacrificers should wear a painted tunic with a copper pectoral, which has been since turned into gold and silver. This is what was called a cope. They used also a veil, wherewith they covered their head when they sacrificed, called amict. All the ornaments used in our days are of Numa Pompilius's invention. True

\* Æneid, Lib. II., circa finem.

† Page 270.

‡ Alex. ab Alexandri, Lib. IV., Cap. xvii.

it is that they have been mixed with some Jewish, as the stole, the ephod, the girdle, and some few others.

The same Numa, as Plutarch observes in his 'Life,' ordered that the sacrificers should turn themselves round several times, in the adoration and salutation of the gods. Whether this was to represent the turnings of the heavens, or because as their temples faced the rising sun, the worshipper entered therein with his back to the east, and turned first to that side and then towards the gods, making by this means a full round, and completing his prayer by this double adoration. Or whether, by these turns or changes of posture, they designed what the Egyptians intended by wheels, that sublunary things never remain in the same state ; and to teach us to be resigned to the will of the gods in the ordering of our destiny. But not to search farther into the mysteries which the heathens had in their turnings, it is plain that the priests of our days imitate them when they say Mass ; when they turn themselves, now towards the people, and then towards the altar, as may be seen in the ritual, acting very much like the priests of Baal, of whom it is written that they went skipping round the altar.\* Du Choul owns that this custom passed from the pagans to them. 'When the priest was come to the point of sacrificing,' says he, 'he conveyed his hand to his mouth, and turned himself, as priests do in our religion.'† Polidore Virgil also acknowledges it, saying : 'The pagan priests turned themselves in performing their sacrifices, especially when they delivered oracles, and when they were filled (as they imagined) and agitated with the Divine Spirit. From

\* 1 Kings xviii.

† Page 175.

thence, without the least doubt, is descended to us the custom of turning round at the altar.\*

The sacrifice pretended to be performed in the Mass ought to be done only in the morning, because, saith St. Thomas, 'you must work whilst it is light.'† John IX. and Azor‡ say that to celebrate it in the afternoon is a deadly sin.' This is the common opinion of doctors.§ But St. Thomas and his followers had spoken more ingenuously had they acknowledged that herein the Church of Rome conformed itself to the pagans. Du Choul owns it. 'It was a ceremony,' says he, 'used by the Egyptians to salute their gods in the morning; those of the Christian religion have followed it by saying the office of matins, and retain what the Egyptians called the hours, first, second, and third; which we have called prime, tierce, and sexte.' And in another place: 'The priests, with solemn prayers, invoked the gods with profound devotion; for which prayers they chose the morning, the Egyptians holding that the most proper time for sacrifices. And their opinion was that their gods then were more particularly attentive in the temples to hear their prayers.'||

It was the custom of the Egyptians to make use of organs, flutes, and other musical instruments then in use, during the celebration of their sacrifices to the gods. 'No sacrifices are performed without music,' says Galen.¶ And Strabo assures us that the priests of Cybele, during the sacrifices, made

\* Lib. V., Cap. ii.

† Thomas, Part III., qu. 83, Art. 2 ad 4.

‡ Lib. XX., Ch. xxv., qu. 6.

§ See Francol de Temp. hore Canon, Part I., Ch. xli.

|| Page 309.

¶ Gal., Lib. XVII., de off. part. hum. Scaliger li. Poet., Ch. xliv.

use of the sounds of cymbals and drums.\* These things Arnobius ridiculed. 'Do your gods,' saith he, to the pagans, 'take pleasure in music? Do they delight in the sounds of cymbals and drums? Do they imagine honour is paid them with the sound of a saraband? And is that capable of appeasing them when they are very angry?'† 'Tis very improbable that this ancient doctor would have thus rallied the pagans, if in his day organs had been used in the churches of the Christians—antiphons, collects, graduals, tracts, secances, and so many other musical performances, invented by the popes to serve as ornaments in the sacrifice of the Mass, had been so much as thought of by the followers of Christ.

The Roman ritual expressly enjoins that there be, night and day, one or more lamps always burning before the altar; and this is religiously observed in all churches. This cannot be said to be done in obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ, or in imitation of the Apostles and primitive Christians. True it is, they lighted up torches when they met, but it was not by day nor before altars or images, which have eyes and see not, but to light them in dark nights, as they durst not meet in the daytime by reason of the persecution, as appears from Pliny the younger's letter to the Emperor Trajan. This custom took its rise from the pagan superstition. The Egyptians, saith Clement Alexander, were the inventors of lamps in the temples.‡ And to this it is that Blondus alludes, when he saith that the Egyptians maintained in their temples a perpetual fire, as being

\* Strabo, Lib. X.

† Arnob., Lib. VII., in the middle of the book.

‡ Clem. Alex., in the middle of the book.

similar to the nature of the gods.\* From them the custom passed to the Romans; the principal office of the Vestals being to keep the fire, which was called sacred, lighted in their temples; and they performed no religious ceremonies without the use of lamps and torches, made of a sort of wood called *tæda*. Perhaps they observed thereby the maxims of Pythagoras, who directs in one of his symbols not to speak of Divine things without torches. This custom of keeping lamps burning day and night in the temples was so much in use among the pagans that the fathers of the first centuries often made themselves merry with it as a ridiculous superstition. If, saith Lactantius, they would but deign to look up to that light we call the sun, they would know that God, who had given mankind so bright a luminary, needed not their lamps. If that circle, which, by reason of its great distance, appears no bigger than a man's head, hath so glaring a light that our eyes cannot bear it; and if the looking steadfastly on it for a small time occasions the loss of sight, what light and splendour must we imagine there is in God! Is it possible to suppose those in their right senses who offer to the Author and Giver of light the weak light of tapers and torches?† The custom of offering up tapers to God was undoubtedly not then known amongst the Christians. For which reason it was that St. Hierom so angrily answers Vigilantius, who complained that in his time that superstitious ceremony began to get footing in the churches. 'We see,' said Vigilantius, 'that, under pretence of religion, the custom of the pagans to light up a quantity of flambeaux whilst the sun shines has been introduced into

\* Blondus, *Rom. Triumph.*

† Lact., *Lib. VI., Cap. ii.*

churches. Is it to do honour to the martyrs and the Lamb of God (who, sitting on the throne, surround them with the brightness of His majesty) that you light up to them your vile tapers? To this St. Hierom replies: 'We do not light up candles whilst it is day, as you falsely allege; but we, by this means, banish from us the darkness of the night. If anyone acts otherwise, it is in honour to martyrs, to accommodate themselves to the simplicity of the men of the age or some bigoted women, of whom it may be truly said, that they are zealous for God, but not according to reason.\* The Council of Eliberius, held under Constantine the Great at the same time with that of Nice, had already made an ordinance to forbid the indiscreet zeal of those bigots, prohibiting, upon pain of excommunication, the lighting up tapers in the daytime as the pagans did. 'It hath been ordered that no tapers be lighted in the daytime in burying places. Whoever fails of observing this order shall be cut off from the communion of the Church.†

There is no solemn Mass celebrated without incense, which is blessed by the priest on the altar of incense, wherewith he himself is first perfumed by the deacon, then the book which he holds in his hand and the altar itself on which the sacrifice is to be performed. This was also borrowed from the pagans, who never sacrificed without incense. And it was from its use in sacrifices that the Romans gave it its name; the Latin word, which signifies incense, thus being derived from a Greek verb signifying to sacrifice. And lest it should be said with Bellarmin, 'that the Christians have not taken the ceremony of incense from the

\* Hier. adv. Vigil. cereos non clara luce, ut tu criminaris, etc.

† Can. xxxiv.



heathens but from the Jews,\* it is very easy to show that they follow not the Jews alone, but that they imitate the pagans also, the latter using it in all their ceremonies as a means proper to appease their gods. Witness this distich of Ovid :

‘Sæpe Jovem vidi cum jam sua mittere vellet  
Fulmina, thure dato, sustinuisse manum.’†

That is to say, I have often seen that, when Jupiter was ready to cast his thunder, he stops his hand when incense was offered up to him. Alexander of Alexandria assures us ‘that the Egyptians appeased their gods, not with victims, but with prayers and incense.’‡ And Arnobius puts this interrogatory to the pagans of his time : ‘We ask you from whence and how long you have had that knowledge of incense, so as to believe that it must be offered up to the gods, and that it will be acceptable to them?’§ Ecclesiastical history acquaints us, that in order to try the Christians, they ordered those who fell under suspicion to throw some grains of incense into the fire in honour of the idols, which, if they refused to do, they were put to death. We read in sundry epistles of St. Cyprian, that those who had committed the fault called ‘thurificatus’ were not admitted to the peace of the Church till after a long and severe penance. The crime of Pope Marcellin is sufficiently known and owned by all. He, being bribed with money, as himself confessed, had the baseness to offer incense to idols, by reason of which he was condemned by the Council of Sinuessa, now called ‘rocha de monte Dracone.’ This

\* Bell. de Missa, Lib. II., Cap. xv.

† Ovid Fast., Lib. V.

‡ Alex. ab Alexandro Genial dierum., Lib. II., Cap. xxii.

§ Arno., Lib. VII.

pretended head of the Church, who is said to be infallible, proved less so on this occasion than those brave Christian soldiers of whom Theodoret relates, that it so happening that they had thrown incense in the fire, when they received from the Emperor Julian, surnamed the Apostate, the present made to the soldiers according to custom ; some of the pagans having told them of that as of a ceremony and sign of their religion, they straightway ran through the streets of the city, crying out they were Christians, that the emperor had most wickedly deceived them, and that they were ready to blot out their fault with their own blood. They went on to the very palace of the emperor, complaining of the imposition, and requiring to be burnt, to the end the fire which had defiled might purge them, which so irritated the emperor that he condemned them to die ; but he soon recovered from his passion, and sent them his pardon when they were on the scaffold.

On Sunday before the solemn Mass, the priest is used to bless the water, which for that reason is called holy, after which he first sprinkles himself, and afterwards those who serve at the office, then the altar and the people, and this sprinkling, saith Bellarmin, is a certain expiation and a preparation for the future sacrifice.\* This water is made use of on many occasions, from the opinion that it sanctifies all things whereon it falls. For this reason they sprinkle therewith the flesh at the end of Lent, the blessed bread, new fruit, new houses and beds ; in a word, everything that is to be blessed. People sprinkle it on themselves, as Durand assures us in his 'Rationale.'† The virtue of this

\* Bellarmin de Missa, Lib. II., Cap. xv.

† Rat. div. off., Lib. IV., Ch. iv.

water is not better accounted for than from the prayer the priest makes use of in the consecration of it, which may be seen in the Roman ritual, and is as follows: 'O God, who for the salvation of mankind hast founded the highest sacrament in the substance of water, be propitious to our prayers, and pour forth the virtue of Thy benedictions on this element, prepared with many purifications, to the end that Thy creature serving in this mystery may have the virtue and Divine grace to expel the devil and repulse distempers; and all that shall be sprinkled with this water, whether it be the houses or other places of the faithful, may be cleansed from all impurity and freed from all guilt. That there be no pestilent spirit or any corrupting air, but that it may remove all the hidden snares of the enemy; and if anything annoys the health or quiet of the inhabitants, let all fly away at the sprinkling of this water.' This is done in imitation of the Gentiles, who had the same opinion of their holy water, which they called *lustralis* or *expiatoria*, because of the virtue they attributed to it of cleansing or expiating everything on which it was sprinkled. Sea water or salt water (as is that which is used by the Church of Rome) washes off the sins of men, saith the poet Euripides.\* Blondus acquaints us that there was anciently at Rome, near the Porta Capena, a consecrated stream called Mercury's Well, whither the people went to sprinkle themselves with a bay-bough, holding that the water had the virtue of expiating sins, especially perjury and lying.† Ovid, as much a pagan as he was, laughed at this. When speaking of Peleus, who thought himself absolved of the murder

\* See p. 79, l. 2.

† Blondus, *Rom. Trium.*, Lib. II., p. 35.

of his brother Phocus, because he had been sprinkled with lustral water by Acastus, he thus cries out :

‘ Ah ! nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis  
Flumineâ tolli posse putatis aqua.’

‘ Ah ! too credulous minds,’ says he, ‘ who imagine that the heinous crime of murder is to be expiated with river-water.’

The pagans also used the same sprinkling of water in their service of preparation for their sacrifices, as Bellarmin saith is done in the Church of Rome. This may be seen in the second apology of St. Justin the Martyr. The Gentiles, at their entering into their temples, sprinkled themselves with water, and then presented to the gods their perfumes and offerings. And, according to the Roman Missal,\* sprinkling of holy water is made on bread and flesh. The same thing was practised by the pagans. Julian the Apostate, saith Theodoret,† sprinkled lustral water on the bread and flesh, and on everything that was sold at market. Churches, houses, towns and villages are now sprinkled with it. Tertullian records that the pagans of his time did the same. They expiate, saith he, the villages, the houses, the churches, and towns with the sprinkling of water : ‘ Villas, domos, templa, totasque urbes aspergine circumlata aqua expiant passim.’‡

Theodoric of Niem observes that about the year 1408, Pope Benedict XIII. had the Host carried before him, as a safeguard against several princes, his enemies. And since that time, when the pope goes in the country, the Host is

\* Rom. Miss., towards the end.

† Theod. Hist. Eccl., Lib. III., Cap. xiv.

‡ Tertul. de Baptismo.

carried before him to serve him as a guard. Cardinal du Perron would persuade us this is done in imitation of the Israelites, and says: 'If it was allowed to carry the ark of God in the midst of their army, against their visible enemies, the Christians can have no better guard against their invisible enemies than that of which the ark was a type.'\* But methinks the example of the Israelites is not to the purpose; for we cannot find that the high-priest had the ark of the covenant carried before him in his journeys, for this had been too high a presumption. This subtle cardinal might with more reason have alleged the example of the same Jews who, when they had fallen into idolatry, carried with them the tabernacle of Moloch, wherewith St. Stephen reproaches them. On account of which the Jesuit Sanctius's commentary on that text is very remarkable: 'The tabernacle,' saith he, 'was a certain shrine, wherein, with solemn pomp, was carried Moloch, which the Jews, in imitation of the pagans, carried with them out of devotion, and for their protection and guidance whithersoever they went. That it was a custom among the heathens to bear their tutelary gods as companions of their voyages, Servius sheweth on this verse of the sixth *Æneid*: "*Errantesque Deos agitataque numina Trojæ.*" And I do not think it was for any other reason that Rachel stole away the gods of her father, and that Jacob, when his servants went forth from Mesopotamia, took away their idols and buried them;† and on the same account I presume it was, that Laban so soon missed his gods, because he was going forth, and designed to take them with him as he used to do, but could not find them. Now, Jacob seems then to have shown a reason why the idols were

\* Tract., p. 918; Act., Cap. vii.

† Gen. xxxv.

carried away by his servants, when he saith, that God had accompanied him on his journey; as if he had said that such gods ought not to be carried, as are rather a scandal and stumbling-block than guides; and that there is one true and faithful guide, whom he had had in his long and dangerous journey.'

The pagans believed that the gods had their common habitation in heaven, for which reason they called them *Cœlicolæ*—*i.e.*, inhabitants of heaven; but they imagined also that they frequently came down on earth, mixed with them, and even that they might be wounded, as is evident from many passages in Homer; who, for example, alleges that Venus,\* having joined in the battle betwixt the Greeks and Trojans, was wounded in the hand by Diomedes, from which gushed out blood, such as that of the immortal gods. Marst† had as unlucky an adventure, being wounded in the belly, of which he made great complaints to Jupiter, showing him the blood which flowed from his wound. The Romanists hold that Jesus Christ is in heaven, at the right hand of God; but they also believe that He comes daily down to the earth at the consecration of the Eucharist, that He maybe wounded, and that blood in such cases issues from His immortal body. Witness the celebrated Host, which Pope Eugenius presented to Philip, the good Duke of Burgundy, wherein, as historians relate, one may see the stab which a Jew gave it with a knife, with the drops of blood which issued from the wound.‡ It is to this day preserved at Dyon, with great devotion, and to it people go far and near in pilgrimage. The good King Louis XII., being recovered of a great sickness, attributed his cure to the vow he had made of

\* *Iliad*. E.      † *Ibid*.      ‡ Mezeray, in the Life of Louis XII.

visiting that miraculous Host, which vow he performed, for he went in person to pay thereto the homage of his life and crown.

The ancient doctors of the Church commonly reproached the pagans with worshipping the works of their hands, and that they themselves made their gods. 'They fear and worship a piece of earth, which they have figured with their own hands,' says Lactantius.\* 'Thou makest with thine own hands a god whom thou worshippingest,' said St. Hierom.† They ridiculed their consecration, by which the heathens imagined that the gods came to unite with their images. 'They force their gods,' saith Arnobius, 'to enter into them, and to unite with them, by virtue of dedication.'‡ I leave the reader to make the application of this to the Eucharist of the Roman Church, which the Romanists adore for the true God. Let them judge, if they do not at the same time fear, and worship a thing which the hands of men have formed; that they compel Jesus Christ by consecration to come and unite with the species of bread and wine. For be a priest never so vile or wicked, at what time soever he hath an intention to consecrate, Jesus Christ must come to unite with the sacrament. 'After consecration of the bread and wine,' saith the Council of Trent,§ 'our Lord Jesus Christ, truly God and man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the species of these sensible things.'

The same doctors of the first centuries ridiculed the custom of the pagans to keep their gods under lock and key for fear of thieves. 'Why keep you them locked up?' says Arnobius; 'is it for fear thieves should take them

\* Lib. V., Cap. xv.

† Arn., Lib. VI.

‡ Hierom in Ps. 113.

§ Sess. 13, Ch. i.

away by night? If you are assured they are gods, leave to them the care of keeping themselves; leave their temples always open.\* May not the same thing be asked of those of the Roman Church who, by the express command of Innocent III., lock up the sacrament, which they call God? 'We command,' saith that pope, 'that in all churches the Eucharist be kept under lock and key, that it may not be touched by sacrilegious hands.' True it is that this precaution is advisable; for as the gods of the pagans might be stolen, as happened to those of Laban, the same accident may befall that which the Romanists pay adoration to; as happened at Paris, on the night between the 14th and 15th of October, 1665, when thieves broke into the church of St. Sulpice, and carried away several pixes with consecrated Hosts, of which the 'Gazette' gave all Europe an account.

The heathens concealed their mysteries, and it was forbid to speak concerning them before persons who were not initiated in them. 'They conceal their shame,' says Tertullian.† And Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of the mysteries of Eleusina, says, 'Those were things to be kept secret and not to be spoken of.'‡ The same is practised in the Roman Church. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, mentioning consecration, saith 'that they do not treat of so high matters to the end the curates may not instruct the faithful concerning such high mysteries, unless necessity obliges them thereto, because it is not fitting for those who are not initiated in sacred things to be instructed in them, lest the priests commit some fault in the performance of that sacrament.'§

\* Arno., Lib. VI.

† Tert. contra Valent.

‡ Greg. Naz., Orat. 39, p. 85.

§ Cath. Conc. Trid. de Euch., qu. 19.



## CHAPTER V.

### OF PROCESSIONS.

THE procession of the sacrament, which is one of the most solemn ceremonies of the Roman Church, is performed yearly with extraordinary pomp. It cannot, however, be said to have been instituted by Jesus Christ, who ordered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be taken and eaten by the Christians in commemoration of His death for a spiritual worship and adoration, and not for pomp and show, as Queen Catherine de Medicis represented to the pope in a letter she wrote to him upwards of one hundred years ago.\* This was introduced amongst the Christians in imitation of the pagans, as Du Choul acknowledges when he says 'that when the sacrificers to the Mother of the Gods made their supplications through the streets, they carried the statue of Jupiter, and that resting-places were erected whereon to place the statue—the like to which we now observe in France,' saith he, 'on the solemnity of Corpus Christi Day.' Let those who yearly see the ceremonies of that procession compare what is then done with the description given by pagan authors of the processions in honour of Ceres, Isis, and Diana, and they will find them

\* Hist. Thuan., ch. xxviii.

perfectly agree. Virgil, in the first book of his 'Georgics,' charges the farmers not to fail in their yearly celebration of the feast of Ceres, but always to accompany the happy Hostia when carried in procession three times round the fields.

'Annuæ magnæ, sacra refer cereri, etc.,  
Terque novas circum felix eat Hostia fruges.'

Ovid adds that those who followed it carried lighted tapers, and were clothed in white.

'Illic accendit geminas pro lampade pinas.'

Et alibi :

'Vestes cerealibus albas,  
Sumite, nunc pulli velleris usus abest.'

Thus, in the procession of the sacrament, the ritual directs that the priest who carrieth it be covered with a white cope, and that all who accompany him have lighted tapers in their hands, and devoutly sing. The description Apuleius gives in the eleventh book of his 'Metamorphosis' of the magnificence wherewith the procession at the feast of Diana was performed comes still nearer what is acted in our days.\* He shows, in the first place, those who made the prelude to the ceremony. 'One was girt with a belt, and marched with the air of a soldier ; another, with a cap and a spear, represented a hunter ; another, dressed like a lady, in gilt pattens, in silk, with borrowed locks, mimicked, as much as he could, the gait and all the airs of a woman ; another carried the boots, the buckler and sword, as if he came from a fencing-school ; one personated a magistrate with the fasces and purple ; another, with his cloak, his staff, his sandals, and his goat's beard, acted the philosopher. I saw

\* Apul., Lib. II. Metam., p. 200, edit. Plantin, 1587.

there a tame she-bear dressed like a lady, and carried on a chair ; and a monkey with a hat and a yellow gown, etc. ; likewise an ass, to which they had fastened fins, walking by a feeble old man, so that you would have taken one for Pegasus and the other for Bellerophon—both very ridiculous.’ I own that in France, excepting at Aix in Provence, one sees no such extravagance on Corpus Christi Day ; but in Spain and Italy it is worse than at Aix. They disguise themselves, if possible, in more ridiculous forms. There are maskers go dancing to the sound of violins, and use the most lascivious gestures. And I have heard people of reputation and veracity assert that they carry dogs and cats about in swaddling clothes, which creatures, mixing their cries with the sound of the instruments, make the strangest music in the world. Polidore Virgil, who wrote what he had seen in his own country, and who hath the approbation of the Church of Rome, deserves particular credit here : ‘The Romans,’ saith he, ‘and other nations made superstitious processions. From hence it is doubtless that the custom is derived among us. For in the pomp of our processions it is usual to have some pleasantry go before, as files of soldiers, foot and horse, some figures of ingenious contrivance for ridicule, such particularly as open a wide, frightful mouth, and make a clattering noise with their teeth. These are mixed with other diversions. The prophets are personated. One acts David, another Solomon ; others are habited as queens. Artificial wings are tied to certain children, and the children are made to sing.’\* See you not here a perfect conformity with the account Apuleius gives us of the procession in honour of Diana ?

\* Pol. Virg., Ch. xi., p. 414.

'Tis still more evident from what the same author adds farther : ' A train of women walked before dressed in white, strewing the ways with flowers, which they took out of their bosoms ; then followed the pomp of the goddess ; after this a great number of people carrying flambeaux, tapers, and torches ; then a band of music, in which the flute and trumpet melodiously joined. This was followed by a gay troop of singing boys clothed in white, repeating entertaining verses. The superiors or superintendents of the religion (who are like unto stars upon earth with their shaven crowns, and covered with a white veil) carried the sacred relics of the omnipotent gods. Those who held the next rank were clothed in the same manner, and carried the altars. After these appeared the gods, who vouchsafed to walk on the feet of men ;\* then a person bearing the box, wherein the mysteries were enclosed, and which wholly covers the arcana of the magnificent religion. Next followed a person carrying in his happy bosom the venerable effigy of the sovereign divinity.' I hope the reader will carefully consider the words of this pagan author, and apply them to the mysteries of our days. I will, moreover, affirm this, that as, in the procession of the sacrament, the streets through which that is to pass are hung with tapestry, pursuant to an order of the Roman ritual, so did the pagans also. ' All the places through which the pomp was to pass were hung as is practised by us,' says Blondus† and Polidore Virgil.‡ This last acquaints us that in Italy boys and girls are forbidden to see the procession from windows—that is, from on high

\* *Dei dignati incedere pedibus humanis.*

† Blondus, *Rom. Trium.*, p. 52.

‡ Pol. Virg., *Lib. VI.*, Cap. xi.

downwards. The pagans forbade the same, for which Verrius Flaccus assigns this reason, that when the plague was at Rome the oracles answered that it was because the gods were gazed at from on high downwards. The Latin word *despicere* made use of in the oracle, having a double meaning, and signifying 'to look down,' as well as to condemn or despise, the whole city was uneasy to know the true meaning of the oracle ; whereupon it happened that on the day of the procession of Diana a lad who had seen the show from the highest story of the house, and told his mother that he had seen in what order the mysteries, which were carried in a chariot, were disposed ; the Senate being informed of this, it was ordered that all places hereafter through which the procession was to pass should be blinded with tapestry. This lad having cleared up the ambiguity of the oracle, the plague presently ceased. And thus it was discovered that the gods complained they were gazed at from on high, which was a matter, it seems, that polluted the sacred ceremonies. 'From thence,' saith Polidore Virgil, 'it is that boys and girls are forbidden to look upon the procession from windows.'

All other processions of the Roman Church, whether ordinary, which are done regularly on certain days of the year, as that on the day of the Purification, that on Palm Sunday, on the feast of St. Mark and of the Three Kings ; or extraordinary, which are performed for the obtaining of rain in a great drought, or for fair weather in great rains, and for the putting a stop to a tempest ; the processions in time of a plague, of war, of famine, or other calamities— are also an imitation of the pagans, amongst whom nothing was more common than those processions which they called

supplications. On these occasions they carried the images of their gods and relics in great pomp, as Macrobius saith : ‘Vebuntur in pompa circensium simulacra deorum.’ ‘Our priests do the like in their processions,’ saith Polidore Virgil\* ; to which he subjoins these words, very well worthy of attention : ‘We retain all these ceremonies ; but I know not whether what is done be so good as it is entertaining. I fear, I fear,’ saith he, ‘that herein we do more honour to the gods of the pagans than to Jesus Christ. For those will have their votaries to be magnificent in their processions, as Sallust hath it ; but Christ abhors nothing more, saying, “When thou prayest, go to thy closet, where, having locked thy door, say thy prayer.” What, then, will become of us if we run counter to His commandment ? Truly, whatever befalls us, we most certainly act contrary to it.’

As to the marching order observed in their processions, the conformity betwixt that practised in our days and that practised by the pagans may be gathered from Du Choul,† in the description he gives of an antique medal. ‘I remember,’ says he, ‘to have seen a medal of Domitian on the reverse of which was represented a procession of the ancient Romans ; the singing boys marching before, after them the priests in surplices, all of them crowned, and with a branch of bays in their hands, and the emperor following it in his purple robe.’

The reasons for which the Roman Church orders extraordinary processions are, as we have said, to obtain health, rain, or fair weather ; and on these occasions, for show of greater devotion, they go barefoot. The heathens did the same. ‘This is a manifest proof of your blindness,’ saith

\* Lib. VI., Cap. xi.

† Page 250.

Tertullian, in his 'Apology' for the Christians,\* 'that during the great droughts of the summer, when an excessive heat shuts up the rain, and hinders its falling on the earth, at the time when all are wishing for water to bring the fruits to maturity, etc., you implore Jupiter, by sundry sorts of sacrifices and superstitions, to send the succours you stand in need of. You bid the people make processions on their bare feet.† You look for, from the Capitol, that which is found in heaven alone. You expect the ceilings of your temples should be converted into clouds to give you rain.'

In the Roman Church processions are made round the fields to fetch down blessings on the fruits of the earth, and prevent tempests or bad weather, which might spoil them.‡ This is the very thing pagans called 'lustrating the fields,' and which they practised yearly, as appears by these lines of Tibullus :

'Fruges lustramus et agros.  
Ritus ut á prisco traditus extat cevo ;§

that is to say, 'We go in procession round the corn and the fields, according to an ancient custom established among us.' Virgil, in his fifth eclogue :

'Cum solemnna vota  
Reddemus nymphis, et cum lustrabimus agros ;'

*i.e.*, 'When we shall offer up solemn vows to the nymphs, and make processions round the fields.' There was a day dedicated amongst the ancient Romans for the performance of these processions, viz., the 25th of April, which they called *Rubigalia*,|| or the Mildew Feast, because they then

\* Ch. xl.

† Nudi pedalia populo denunciatis.

‡ Rom. Ritual of Bened.

§ Tibul., Lib. II., Eleg. 2.

|| Ovid, Fasti., Lib. IV.

offered sacrifices and prayers to the gods for preserving the corn from the mildew. The same ceremony is now performed in the Roman Church on the feast of St. Mark.

The banner carried in our days at processions (as if processions were military marches) owes its rise also to a custom of the ancient Romans, who, out of devotion, set up a banner in their armies, which in Tertullian's time was called *labarum*, and it was worshipped both by commanders and private men. On it was painted an eagle, the ensign and the tutelary bird of the empire. From hence it is that ensigns are called sacred in processions, and that they are saluted; and the effigies of saints of both sexes are painted thereon because they are the patrons of parishes.

We have already mentioned what Apuleius relates of the procession which the pagans performed in honour of Diana—viz., that her devotees went armed, putting on the air and habit of soldiers. The priests, who were called *salii*, were so accoutred on the day they performed the solemn procession, which was in the month of March. The author of the romance entitled 'Clelia' gives this description thereof, which he hath taken from Dionysius of Halicarnassus,\* Livy,† and Plutarch.‡ 'All one sees in this ceremony,' saith he, 'carries a face of war. In effect, the *salii* have on that day coats of mail, embroidered, besides broad belts. They have on their heads a sort of helmet rising to a point, etc. They also have a short dagger hanging at their side. They hold in their right hand a javelin, and each one of the twelve bucklers, called

\* Dion. Hal., Lib. II.

† Livy, Lib. I.

‡ Plut. in the Life of Numa.



*anciles*. Thus accoutred, they pass along, dancing and skipping through the city, and singing songs in honour of the god Mars, whose festival they celebrate. But that this dance may have a warlike resemblance, they sometimes draw their swords, and strike in cadence on the buckler of the nearest to them. Meanwhile, those who thus dance and strike give in their march the idea of a fight: for now they are all in order; then seemingly fight one against another, mixing so as not to be distinguished. Some attack, whilst others retreat; then the latter advance, and make the others retreat in their turn.' Do but compare this description with the celebrated procession which the zealous ecclesiastics and monks performed at Paris in the year 1590, and you will find a perfect resemblance. This procession hath been elegantly represented in that ingenious piece entituled 'The Spanish Catholicon,' composed by Mr. Pithou, Mr. Rapin, and a priest called Le Roy, which were by far the best pens of that age. After them Mezeray hath thus described it:

'The monks and bishops performed a memorable procession, etc. Rose, the Bishop of Senlis, and the Prior of the Carthusians were at the head as captains, holding each in his left hand a cross and a halbert in his right, personating thereby, as they pretended, the Maccabees leading forth the people of God. After them followed all the monks of the mendicant orders four and four; viz., Capuchins, Bernardins, Minims, Jacobins, and Carmelites, etc. They had their gowns trussed up to their waists, their cowls on their shoulders, helmets on their heads, on their backs a coat of mail. Some of them were also accoutred with bucklers and daggers, others with per-

tuizans ; some with petronels, and others with rusty arms, fit for no other use but to provoke laughter. The old men marched in the first ranks, apeing, as much as they could, the gait and air of captains ; then followed the younger, firing with their muskets, to show their expertness in military discipline. Hamilton, curate of St. Cosmo, acting as sergeant, made them keep their ranks. The most ridiculous creature was the little Bernardin, a monk who, by reason of his halting, could not keep any rank, but, running about, was sometimes at the head, and sometimes at the tail, brandishing a two-handed sword, and twirling about to conceal the fault in his gait. This whole band marching through the street with an affected gravity, rested at times, and mixed, by intervals, anthems and canticles with the firing of their muskets, a spectacle which had the face of the Church militant.\* This could not be called a sudden start of particular men, since it was authorized by the presence of the pope's legate, one of whose almoners happened to be killed by one of those inexpert musketeers at the boot of his coach. But he was quickly comforted upon this fatal accident ; for the almoner dying in so good a cause, it was said that his soul was gone directly to heaven.

At those processions which the Romans called *Lupercales*, young noblemen were seen walking through the streets naked.† The Church of Rome hath often imitated them, or rather outdone them herein, as Mezeray assures us when he describes the superstitions which those of the League practised whilst Paris was besieged by Henry III.

\* Mezeray's Life of Henry IV.

† Plut. in the Life of Romulus and that of Cæsar.

‘Lewdness and effeminacy,’ says he, ‘appeared with insupportable impudence. The most beautiful women went sometimes in a light transparent linen dress, through which their nudities appeared, giving an itch to the most chaste hands, and raising impure desires in the most modest breast.’ History observes that the like lasciviousness was practised formerly by the Parisians in the factious times of Charles VI.

Livy often makes mention of the *Lectisternica*. This ceremony was appointed for appeasing the gods. There were tables set up in the temples to their honour, where, during eight days, the meat of the sacrificed beasts was eaten. The whole time passed in processions and good cheer. It was a Jubilee. The doors of the houses in the city were kept open. The use of all things was common. Strangers without any distinction, whether friends or foes, were admitted; enemies were reconciled; and a familiar correspondence passed betwixt them. All quarrels or law-suits were suspended or accommodated. Prisoners, and even those who were in fetters, were set at liberty; and it was not allowed to bind or confine again those whom the gods had thus set free. Thus Livy\* describes the ceremony, as it was performed in the time of the great plague at Rome, 497 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. ‘I have seen one like it,’ saith Blondus,† ‘in the year 1500 after Christ, when the people of all the cities, towns, and villages of Italy, being visited by a severe plague, clothed themselves in white, and marched in troops to the neighbouring towns, where, being entertained in both

\* Livy, Lib. V., Decad. i.

† Blond., Rom. Trium., p. 46.

private and public houses, they implored the mercies of God with verses composed for that purpose. There were no lawsuits or particular quarrels but what gave way to the public concern.'

## CHAPTER VI.

### OF FESTIVALS, OR HOLY DAYS.

THE President Fauchet, in his 'Life of Clovis,' ingenuously confesses that the introduction of holy days in the Christian religion was made from paganism.\* 'To obviate the reproaches the pagans cast upon the Christians, saying that since their appearance and the contempt of the ancient religion, all calamities had come in the world, etc., our Christians, desirous to show them that they had the public good at heart, instead of the *Pervigilia* and *Lectisternica*, rejoiced on the eves of the anniversaries of their martyrs. In lieu of the *Februa*, *Vinalia*, *Robigalia*, *Ambarvalia*, etc., they feasted or observed the purification, made processions, rogations, and litanies, in which Jesus Christ and the saints were called upon, instead of Jupiter and other false gods of the heathens.' Polidore Virgil owns the same thing; when complaining of the multitude of holy days, and the debauches committed at those times, he saith: 'The greatest part of the world neither employs those holy days in prayers nor in hearing the Word of God, but rather cause them to tend to the corruption of manners, passing them in diversions; as if the sentiment of Plato had

\* Fauchet, in the Life of Clovis, p. 124.

universally prevailed, who says that for that very reason holy days were instituted. Thus do we in this, as in many other things, follow closely the pagans; which conduct is very different from that of our predecessors, who blamed the pagans for it; witness Tertullian, who, when he speaks of the feasts consecrated to the Cæsars, saith: "Must, then, the Christians be enemies to the public, because the honours they pay the emperors are neither vain, rash, nor flattering? Do you think it to be a great mark of affection to light fires and to dance in the streets, to set up tables, to banquet in public places, to change the face of the whole city into that of a large tavern, to dilute the dirt with wine, and run about in troops, committing insolences, and seeking everywhere to gorge their unruly appetites?" The reflection of Polidore Virgil on these words of Tertullian is remarkable. 'When Tertullian,' saith he, 'wrote these things, he did not think the time would ever come when these very things might be applied to the Christians for which he there ridicules the pagans. But the time is come when we rather solemnize the feasts of the Cæsars than those of the Christians.'\*

From the confession of these two Roman Catholic authors, one may conclude that the institution of feasts, which in our days takes up a great part of the year, is an imitation of the pagans. True it is that this praise may be given the pagans as well as to those of the Romish Church, that they are less superstitious than the Jews, who think it a heinous crime to do any sort of work on the Sabbath, not daring to light fires or dress meat for their food, nor to kill a flea, nor even to help themselves out if fallen into a ditch.

\* Pol. Virgil, Lib. VI., Ch. viii.

Stapleton gives us a story of a rabbi, named Solomon, who, having fallen into a bog-house on the Sabbath-day, refused to be helped out, saying :

‘Sabbatha sancta colo, de stercore surgere nolo.’

For which reason he was forced to remain there all Sunday, the Christians retorting :

‘Sabbatha nostra quidem Salomon celebribis ibidem.’\*

The pagans were more reasonable. They abstained during their feasts from their common occupations, but never scrupled to set their hands to such things as were necessary; as, for instance, to repair the fences about their corn and vines, to set fire to the heaths, or to drive their cattle to wash; as Virgil in the first book of his ‘Georgics’ sheweth us :

‘Quippe etiam festus quedam exercere diebus  
Fas et Jura sinunt rivos deducera nulla  
Religio vetuit; segeti prætere sepe;  
Inudias avibus moliri; incendere vepres;  
Balantumque greges fluvio mersare salubri.’

The casuists of the Church of Rome are not more scrupulous.† They allow the poor to work privately on holy-days for their subsistence. They allow surgeons and apothecaries to minister to the sick; public notaries to make wills; butchers to slaughter beasts and to sell meat; farmers to reap or sow, when the delay shall evidently be prejudicial. But setting aside these cases of necessity, the one as well as the other have believed it to be a mortal sin to work on holy-days, and that the gods and the saints concerned have taken their utmost vengeance on those who

\* Stapl. in Propo. mor.

† Tolet. inst. Sacerd., Lib. IV., Cap. xxv.

have profaned the days dedicated to them. The pagans on those days, without any manner of employment, even restrained their women from spinning :

‘ Non audeat ulla  
Lanificam pensis imposuisse manum ;’

*i.e.*, ‘ Let no woman presume to put her hand to wool,’ saith Tibullus.\* And if one may give credit to Ovid’s fables, it went hard with Alcithoe and her sisters for having spun on the feast of Bacchus ; for he, it seems, was so enraged at it that, to be revenged on them, he transformed them into bats.† Poor Pentheus was for the like crime torn to pieces.‡ The histories of the Roman Church are full of the like tales of miraculous punishments, which the saints of either sex have inflicted on the profaners of their festivals. The ‘ History of the Holy Virgin,’ published by Father Melchior, Rector of the College of Prague, furnishes us with a story of a lady of the city of Quamosa, who, having ordered her horses to be put to the coach to go to her farm with an intention to set her servants to work on the day of the Annunciation, when she was got half-way, her horses stopped short as if they were become immovable. The lady, without much minding it, alighted, and went into a secret place to ease nature, when a sudden whirlwind arising threw her to the ground with her face in her ordure, wherewith she was all over bedaubed.§ It is related in the ‘ Annals of Flanders’|| that a man who had got a shirt made on the day of the Assumption of Our Lady, found it,

\* Tib., Lib. II., Eleg. 2.

† Ovid, Meta., Lib. III.

‡ *Id.*, Lib. IV., Fab. i.

§ Hist. Virginis, Lib. V., Ch. ii., anno 1600.

|| Jac. Meyer, Lib. II., Ann. Fland.



as he was going to put it on, sprinkled all over with blood, for which reason it was deposited among the holy relics. St. Francis, as Bonaventure (who wrote his life) tells us, was one of the severest against those who neglected the observation of his festival. 'A wood-seller being gone out one day,' says he, 'to cut wood, as he raised up his axe to give the stroke, he heard a voice crying three times, "It is my feast; it is not permitted to work." But continuing his work, notwithstanding the admonition, both his hands stuck fast to the handle of the axe, he not being able to remove them. True it is that the good saint's anger was not durable; for this poor man, having begged his pardon and made a solemn promise to be more respectful towards him for the future, peace was obtained, and he recovered the use of his hands.' The 'Golden Legend,' in the 'Life of St. Hippolytus,' tells us of an ox-driver, named Peter, who, merely for greasing his waggon on the day of St. Mary Magdalen, saw his waggon and oxen consumed by fire from heaven, and his own thigh scorched in a miserable manner :

'Tantæ ne animis cœlestibus iræ?' \*

You may find many such accounts in Surius's 'Lives of the Saints.'

It was a custom, established by Numa Pompilius, that the *flamins* should cause each festival-day to be proclaimed by the public criers, who, by order of the sovereign pontiff, warned everyone to observe them and abstain from his usual labour.† The same thing is practised in the Roman Church, where, on the eve of the holy days, at the corner of every street, the crier gathers together the people by the

\* Virg. *Æneid.* I.

† Macrob. *Saturn.*, Lib. I., Cap. xvi.

sound of a bell, and acquaints them that such a day will be the feast of such a saint, and that indulgences will be delivered out in such a church to all that desire them.

The most solemn feast of the ancient Romans was that of their secular games, which were celebrated only at the end of each century. At that time the heralds went all over Italy to invite people to come to the games, which they had never seen before and never should see again. People flocked to Rome from all parts of the world, not only to see the extraordinary diversions exhibited in the amphitheatres, but for devotion.\* They went day and night in procession to the temples; they offered to the gods an infinite number of victims in the field of Mars. They there presented their firstfruits, public supplications were made, and hymns sung, to recommend states and families to the divinity.† To this hath succeeded, in the Roman Church, the grand Jubilee, instituted by Boniface VIII., of whom history saith that he came to the papal dignity as a *fox*, behaved like a *lion*, and went off like a *dog*. All Christians were invited to come to Rome; and in order to allure them, to those who should come within the year to visit the Church of the Apostles, an entire remission of their sins was promised, and that not only of the guilt, but likewise of the punishment.

The ambition of the Roman emperors often caused a change in the order and times of these secular games. Those who saw the secular games at too great a distance, and could not expect to live to the expiration of the appointed time, forwarded the celebration of them.

\* Herodi., Lib. III., in vita Severi.

† Adg. Pol. Miscell., Cent. I., Cap. xxxviii.

Augustus was the first who would not wait till the end of the hundred years. Claudius, after him, celebrated them at the end of sixty-three years. 'Which was the cause,' saith Suetonius, 'that the crier was laughed at when he pronounced the usual words, viz., "That they should come to the games, which they never had, nor never would, see again"—because many who had seen those of Augustus were still alive.' The popes have laboured under the same impatience for the time of the Jubilee; for Clement VI., observing the profits which accrued on these good occasions, ordered they should be celebrated every fifty years, 'in imitation,' saith he, in his Bull, 'of the Jews' Jubilee.' Urban VI. would not be tied to that, but appointed them every thirty-third year. Boniface IX. was the most impatient of all, for he celebrated them nine years after Urban, so much he feared lest they should not happen in his pontificate. In fine, Sixtus IV.'s Bull, in order to fix them, after so many variations, ordered they should be observed every twenty-fifth year.

This Romish Jubilee is pretended to be instituted in imitation of that of the Jews, but they bear no resemblance to each other. Boniface VIII., when he instituted it, did not think of that, since he pretended it should not be celebrated by his successors till the end of one hundred years, in imitation of the secular games. In short, in what are they alike? For, in the Jubilees celebrated nowadays, is there anything done like what was practised among the Jews? Are slaves set at liberty? are prison-gates thrown open? are debtors discharged from their debts? do alienated lands return to their first possessors? are lands left untilled? and are their spontaneous products given to

the public? If not, they owe their rise to the pagans. This is owned by Polidore Virgil. 'It is very probable,' saith he, 'that Boniface VIII. instituted the Jubilee in order to take the people off, especially those of Rome, from the vain celebration of the secular games, and to convert that pagan institution into one of a better tendency.'\*

The Roman Church, on the second day of February, celebrates the feast of the Purification, also called Candlemas, in honour of the Blessed Virgin; when the people go in procession round the churches, each holding a wax candle in his hand that hath been consecrated by the priest at Mass. And it is believed that these candles have a marvellous power in driving away devils and repelling all other illusions. A feast of this kind was celebrated by the old Romans, in the month of February, in honour of Proserpine, when the Roman ladies went in the night-time round the temples with lighted flambeaux in their hands.

'Tis not to be denied,' saith Rhenanus on Tertullian, 'that the custom now in use among the Christians, on the day dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to carry lighted tapers in procession, hath taken its rise from the ancient Romans. This change hath wrought a cure upon the obstinacy of the pagans, when an attempt to abolish the institution entirely would rather have irritated.† The 'Legend' owns it, and explains it more at large. And I will quote this concession in the very words of the old French copy, in Gothic characters: 'Why hath the Church commanded that lighted candles should on that day be carried in the hand? To remove the custom of error. For formerly, on the Kalends

\* Pol. Virg., Lib. VIII., Ch. i.

† Annot. in Lib. V., contra Marcio.

of February, the whole city of Rome was surrounded with people, who went about with lighted tapers and torches, in honour of Februa, the mother of Mars, the god of war. The ancient Romans used to offer sacrifices in February to Februus, otherwise called Pluto, the god of hell; and this they did for the souls of their predecessors, that God might be merciful to them. They did, moreover, offer up solemn sacrifices to the souls of their predecessors, and went about all night with lighted tapers and torches. And the Roman women, as Pope Innocent relates, did, on that day, celebrate the feast of Luminaries, being induced to it by the fables of some poets; for the poets said that Proserpine was so beautiful that Pluto, the god of hell, coveted her, ravished her, and made a goddess of her; and that her friends were a great while in search of her, through fields and forests, with lighted tapers and flambeaux. Thus the Roman ladies represented the thing, going about Rome with lighted tapers. Now because it is very difficult suddenly to put off old customs, the new converts to Christianity could not be prevailed with to shake off that custom; and for that reason Sergius the pope changed it into one of a better tendency, namely, that the Christians on that day should go round the Church of the Mother of God. Thus this solemnity was continued; but it is turned to another purpose.'

In this same month of February was celebrated a feast which the Church of Rome hath removed to the first of November, to wit, that of All Souls, otherwise called 'The Commemoration of the Dead.' For in those, as well as in our days, the whole of the people's devotion was employed in offering sacrifices for the repose of souls, to pray on the

graves, and to make processions round the burying-places. For which reason Plutarch, in the 'Life of Romulus,' calls the month of February the 'month of expiations.' Polidore Virgil mentions this custom, and shows its conformity with that of the Romish Church in his sixth book.\* 'The custom,' saith he, 'to perform the service for one's departed friends was long since appointed. Cicero sheweth it in his first oration against Anthony. "Let obsequies and public supplications," says he, "be performed to him whose sepulchre is unknown." Thus annual service was done; that is to say, sacrifices were yearly offered up in honour of the dead, etc. Æneas is reported to have been the first institutor of this ceremony; for he did that honour to his father Anchises, as Virgil describes it in his fifth Æneid. And we observe the same ceremony for the happiness of the dead. And there is all the reason in the world to conclude that from thence Odilon took the yearly celebration of the service for the dead.' This Odilon was an abbot of Clugny, who lived upwards of six hundred years ago, and who having learned (says Antonine and the 'Golden Legend'), by a man coming from Sicily, that a great noise was there heard, and that from the continual fire and flames of Mount Ætna issued horrid roarings and dreadful cries, believed to proceed from the souls who suffered their purgatory in that place, and thus impetrated the prayers of the living, for this reason commanded that, throughout all his diocese, after the feast of All Saints, that of all the dead should be kept; and that upon that day should be offered the sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of their souls; which practice has been ever since established in all the

\* Pol. Virg., Lib. VI., Cap. ix.

churches. But Æneas was the founder of it, as Ovid assures us in the second book of his 'Fasti':

'Hunc morem Æneas, pietatis idoneus author,  
Attulit in terras, juste Latine, tuas.  
Ille patris genio solemnia dona ferebat.  
Hinc populi ritus edidicere novos;'

that is, 'O Latinus! devout Æneas first introduced this custom into thy country; for he offered solemn gifts to the manes of his father. From hence it is that the people have learned new ceremonies.' He was universally imitated for many centuries. Thus Suetonius, in the 'Life of Augustus,'\* saith that the emperor, being in the island Caprea, saw from his chamber a great number of people carrying flambeaux round the grave of one who died the year before. Cardinal Baronius observes the conformity of this with the service performed by the Church of Rome for the dead at the end of the year.†

The pagans were commonly of opinion that the souls of the deceased returned into the world to implore the sacrifices, offerings, and prayers of the living for obtaining a mitigation of their torments. Thus Ovid saith: 'Because the service for the dead had been neglected during the troubles of the wars, frequent apparitions of souls had been seen issuing in the night out of their graves, and complaining, with horrid groans, that the ordinary service for them was not performed:'

'Bustis exisse parentes,  
Et tacitæ questos tempore noctis avos:  
Perque vias urbis latosque ululasse per agros  
Deformes animas.‡'

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\* Suet. in August., Ch. xcvi.

† Baron. Ann. Eccl., Anno 44, § 88.

‡ Fasti, Lib. II.

The same author acquaints us that the bloody shade of Remus stood at the head of Romulus's bed, entreating him to celebrate his anniversary :

' Umbra cruenta Remi visa est assistere lecto ;  
Atque hæc exiguo murmure verba loqui.\*

What this shade required was that Romulus

' Signaret celebrem fratris honore diem ;'

that is, that he would distinguish, by the honours of sacrifice, the anniversary of his brother.

Suetonius, in the 'Life of Caligula,' writes that the body of that emperor having been secretly buried in a garden, the gardeners were every night terrified with spectres, and that in the house wherein he was assassinated no night passed without some horrid apparition ; which disturbance lasted till the house was consumed by fire. Those who have read the 'Dialogues of Pope Gregory I.'† know they are full of such tales of apparitions of souls, who came to implore the living to say Masses for their repose ; for both papists and heathens have imagined that the dead receive great comfort from the sacrifices and prayers offered for them. 'The pagans,' says Blondus,‡ 'entertaining this opinion concerning the souls of the dead, did, after burying and performing their rites, offer up sacrifices for them at the end of nine days, performing the service called the "Ninth." Our people,' saith he, 'do the like, celebrating the divine office for the souls of the dead on the seventh

\* Fasti, Lib. V.

† Particularly the third book, Ch. xxiv., xxv., and the fourth book, Ch. xl. and lv.

‡ Rom. Trium., Lib. II., p. 44.



day, and year after year.\* Polidore Virgil saith the same ; for, after having spoken of the pagans' 'Ninth,' he adds : 'From thence is come the custom with us to perform the service for the dead, the seventh day after the funeral.'†

I cannot forbear taking notice of the rise of a trivial superstition, which has obtained among the heathens, as it does now among the papists, the greatest part of whom scruple to marry in the month of May. This superstition springs from the pagans' offering sacrifices in that month to appease the spirits, which were said to be wandering all night long. For during that time the temples were shut up, and marriages then celebrated were deemed unfortunate, as is evident from these distichs of Ovid :

' Nec viduæ tædis eadem nec virginis apta  
Tempora. Quæ nupsit non diuturna fuit.  
Hac quoque de causa, si te proverbia tangunt,  
Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait ;'‡

that is, 'Those times are not proper for the marriage of either widow or virgin. Those who then marry will not live long. For this reason the proverbial saying of the vulgar is, that none but lewd women marry in the month of May.'

In this month of May it is now a custom, especially in Italy, for the people of both sexes to go into the fields to fetch green boughs, which they plant before their houses. And in France and other countries they plant what they call May-poles. This comes from the ancient Romans,

\* Novem diale sacrum.

† Pol. Virg., Lib. VI., Cap. x.

‡ Ovid, Fastorum, Lib. V.

who then celebrated the feast of the goddess of flowers, whom they named Flora.\*

On the first day of that month was celebrated at Rome the feast of Mars, which was called *Lustria*; who for the space of seven days consecrated the eagles and other ensigns of war. 'From hence,' saith Blondus, 'arises the custom observed in our times, on St. George's Day—when our soldiers carry their ensigns and arms out of town to consecrate them in the woods.'†

The feast of St. Martin is a day of debauch among Christians; the new wines are then begun to be tasted, and the saint's day is celebrated with carousing. For which reason a Christian poet calls that the second bacchanal:

'Altera Martinus dein Bacchanalia præbet;  
Quem colit anseribus populus multoque Lyæo.'‡

This custom is an imitation of the ancient Romans, who kept their Feast of Vintage after the wine was settled; and of the Greeks, who celebrated their *Pithægia*, or feast when they began to broach their new wines, as the term implies. On that day they drank to excess, as Plutarch relates.§

Herodotus assures us that the Egyptians kept an annual feast, the ceremony whereof consisted in lighting up flambeaux round their houses all night—for which reason they called it the Feast of Flambeaux. || 'This solemnity,' saith Baronius, 'is also observed among us, being transferred to the Feast of Ascension.'¶

\* Pol. Virg., Lib. V., Cap. ii.      † Blond., Rom. Trium., p. 56.

‡ Tho. Neagorgus de Regno Pont., Lib. IV.

§ In the third book of his Table-Talk.

|| Lib. II., circa medium.

¶ Ad Ann. 58, v. 28.

The pagans, says Tertullian, adorned their temples and their houses with leaves and flowers on certain festivals—which custom the Christians of the first ages had in abhorrence, chiefly for this reason, that it was practised by the pagans.\* But those of the Romish Church have got over that scruple—‘for,’ saith Baronius, ‘many not being able to prevent their practising this ceremony, it seems to have been introduced very conveniently for the exercise of the true religion.’

But there is still a worse imitation than the foregoing, viz., that of the ancient *Saturnals*, which are now restored by the dissoluteness of the carnival. There was in the former no extravagance practised which is not revived in the latter. ‘That day was consecrated to all kinds of lewdness,’ saith an ancient Christian author,† whose fragments are added to those of Charlemagne. ‘Some were seen disguised in monstrous shapes—putting on the appearance of wild beasts. This hath been long practised in the Church of Rome. The history of France gives us an account of a dreadful accident which happened at a carnival in the reign of Charles VI. There was contrived a masquerade of savages (others say of bears) clothed in linen, fitted close to the body; and on the linen, tow was stuck with pitch, very thin, in imitation of fur. The king thought it so pretty a contrivance that he chose to make one in it; the others were some of the principal nobility of the court. The assembly was at the palace of Queen Blanche. The king himself entering alone thus disguised,

\* De Cor. Mil., Ch. xiii., and de Idol., Ch. xv., Anno 58, v. 29.

† Vide Lipsium de Saturn. It. fragm. vet. Authorum de Ritibus Eccl. Antverpiæ, 1560, cum Privilegio.

and the others being tied together, he left them to dance in the middle of the place, whilst he went to cast himself on the lap of the Duchess of Berry. Meanwhile, came in the Duke of Orleans, who, being desirous to know the masks, ordered his pages, who carried the flambeaux, to advance near—one of whom, having mixed with the dancers, carelessly set fire to the dress of one of them, which flew in a moment from one to another, so that all the dancers were, in an instant, in flames, and a scene of mirth was on a sudden converted into one of horror and commiseration. Instead of the sound of vocal and instrumental music, nothing was heard but screams and horrible howlings from the wretches in flames, who, running to and fro, could not be so soon helped as to prevent their being scorched to death. The king himself escaped by means of the Duchess of Berry, who, knowing him, covered him with her gown, and so hindered the flames, which spread far and wide, from taking hold of the tow and pitch wherewith he was all over besmeared.

All the other disguises and changes of dress which we see in the Church of Rome are come likewise from paganism. For not only at the *Saturnals* and other feasts of debauchery, viz., the *Bacchanals* and *Lupercals*, but at the feast of the Mother of the Gods, called *Megalesia*, people went masked, and women appeared in men's clothes. 'It is allowable on those days,' saith Herodian, 'to play, to be wanton, and appear in what dress one will.\*' Ovid, in his 'Fasti,'† attributes the rise of these masquerades to Hercules, who, to put a trick on Faunus, his co-rival, on Bacchus's festival day, dressed himself in the attire of the

\* Lib. I.

† Ovid, Fasti, Lib. II.

beautiful Lyda, his mistress, and went and hid himself in an obscure cave: Faunus, who was very much in love with Lyda, thinking it to be her, followed soon after, but, finding it to be Hercules in Lyda's dress, he returned very much ashamed.

Seneca gives us 'an account of the madresses of the *Saturnals*, in such a manner as if he had seen ours on Shrove Tuesday. 'We are in the month of December,' saith he to Lucilius, 'a season when all the city is in a debauch; when extravagance knows no law; everyone makes what noise he pleases; so great preparations are made, as if the *Saturnals* were no days for work. Were you here, I would ask what you would choose to do, whether, not to go counter to the custom of all the world, we had not better put off our gowns, and debauch like all the rest? For now, for the sake of diversion and feasting, we disguise ourselves. It were doubtless a wiser and more generous conduct to remain dry and sober in the midst of a people who fill themselves with wine, and who, through their excesses, disgorge their liquor in the street. But complacency obliges one not to affect singularities, but to do as others do, provided it be done in another manner; for one may be diverted without being dissolute.'\* This philosopher speaks of the debaucheries of his time with a more serious air than the most reformed Capuchins in our times would do of the carnival; for it is well known that those religious do very much abate of their gravity on those days, and make themselves amends for the austerities of the remaining part of the year.

It is urged, however, that those who are guilty of those

\* Epist. XVIII., § 1.

excesses are not many, and that the fault of a few must not be imputed to the whole Church, since the Church condemns it. But the pagans could say the same of their Saturnals, Bacchanals, and Lupercals. Cicero, in his second 'Philippic,' reproaches Anthony for having been at those feasts, and Varro, discoursing of the bacchanals, says 'they could not be celebrated but by people out of their senses.\*' The Fathers have upbraided the pagans therewith. They had much less reason for so doing than we have to object them to the Church of Rome, because, among the pagans, there never was an honest man who did not blame those excesses; whereas there are renowned doctors of the Romish Church who, with Cardinal Cajetan, approve what is done now; not to mention particulars, which may be thought of little weight, what can one say of the custom of converting the seats of justice into places of debauchery, reserving the bawdy causes for those days when the pleaders are allowed by their words and gestures to represent all that is most shocking in whoredom, even in places which ought to be the sanctuaries of chastity, the schools of continency, and the seats of modesty? O Celsus! O Porphyry! O Julian! what advantage would you have taken on the ancient Church if you then had seen what we see at this day in the Church of Rome? The senate of old Rome sufficiently showed their dislike of the villainies perpetrated on the bacchanals, since they condemned them by a solemn decree; but that of the new has hitherto continued theirs.

\* August. de Civ. Dei, Lib. V., Cap. ix.

† Livius, Lib. IX.; August. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XVIII., Cap. xiii.

## CHAPTER VII.

OF THE SAINTS, THEIR CANONIZATION, THE WORSHIP PAID  
THEM, AND THE OFFICES ATTRIBUTED TO THEM.

READ Plato and Apuleius among the pagans,\* Tertullian and the author of the 'Recognitions' among the Christian doctors, and you will find that the heathens believed that there was a sovereign Deity who was absolutely Master over all things ; but they believed farther that there were many inferior and subaltern divinities, to each of whom they assigned their offices according to the rank they imagined them to hold. 'Most have that opinion of the godhead,' saith Tertullian, 'that the supreme power belongs only to one, and that he commits the exercise of his functions to all the other gods, which was what Plato meant when he represented the great Jupiter in heaven, accompanied with an army of gods and demons.†' He afterwards saith that they compared the heavenly court to that of the emperor, where he is raised in dignity above all, and hath under him his ministers and officers, and that the one and the others must have respect paid them according to his rank and quality. 'You aver,' saith the same author, 'that honour must be paid to the officers and lieutenants of the prince, as to him whose majesty they represent.' The author of

\* Apul. de dogm. ; Plato, p. 257.

† Tert. Apol., Cap. xxiv.

the 'Recognitions,' who is called St. Clement, attributes this theology to the pagans of his time. 'We also maintain,' saith he, 'that there is a god, who is lord over all, but these whom we serve are gods also. As there is but one Cæsar, who hath under him several judges—for example, governors, consuls, tribunes, and other such powers—we hold in the same manner that there is a supreme god. There are also others, resembling those powers we have spoken of, who are appointed gods in this world, who, though they be really subject to the supreme, yet they dispose of us, and of the things which are in the world.'\* Are not these the very same sentiments of the Church of Rome? They believe that there is a supreme God, Governor of all things; but they believe also that there are under Him a great number of saints or inferior gods (for they commonly call them, in Latin, *divos*, gods) to whom He commits the care of His affairs, assigning each of them a share, for which reason they qualify them with the appellation of mediators, patrons, or protectors; but above all the other gods and goddesses (*divos* and *divas*),† they attribute a high authority to the Holy Virgin, whom they call the Queen of heaven and earth, of the angels and archangels. According to this diversity of conditions, they will have us pay a religious worship to each, in proportion to their dignity: to God, the worship of *Latria*; to the Virgin, *Hyperdulia*; and to the others, *Dulia*. They maintain that they do nothing herein but what is very acceptable to God, who takes pleasure in seeing His friends honoured, whom He hath glorified. The pagans had the

\* Clem. Recogn., Cap. v.

† Bellarm. de Beat. Sanct., Lib. I., Ch. xii.



like sentiments, and talked in the same manner. 'Those who serve several gods,' says Celsus, the philosopher in Origen, 'do a thing acceptable to the great God, because none deserves honour but those to whom God hath vouchsafed that favour.'

The invocation of the saints is altogether of Plato's invention, whose doctrines have been blindly admitted by the ancient Fathers of the Church ; for he taught that as God did not mix with men, there were mediating spirits who received our prayers and carried them to the Supreme Being.\* 'There are,' saith Apuleius, 'certain middle divinities betwixt the high heavens and this low earth, by whom our prayers and merits are carried to the gods. They are called demons in Greek. They carry up the prayers of men to the gods, and bring down the favours of the gods to men ; they go and come to carry on one side the petitions, on the other the relief ; they are as interpreters and salvation-carriers from the one to the others.† In this same quality are the saints, in our days, worshipped in the Church of Rome. True it is that the common people make little or no difference betwixt them and the supreme Divinity ; that they even address mostly, and with more confidence, the Virgin Mary, or some other saints whom novelty hath brought into vogue, than God, and do not simply consider them as mediators, but as the authors of all benefits, as well for the body as the soul ; but the councils will have them addressed simply as intercessors, who intercede with God for men who offer up their prayers, and by their credit obtain their desires. 'We do not worship God and the saints in the same manner,' saith the Catechism of the

\* Plato in *Sympos.*

† Apuleius *de Deo Socratis*, p. 290.

Council of Trent ; 'for we pray to God that He would grant us His favours and deliver us from evils ; but we ask of the saints (because they have credit with God) that they may take us into their protection, to the end they may obtain from God those things we stand in need of.'\*

Those petty divinities, which the pagans worshipped, besides the Supreme, were, by their own confession, men, who having in their lifetime given admiration to the people, have given occasion to men to pay them divine honour after their death. This appears from the ancient laws of the pontificate mentioned by Cicero in these words : Let the gods be worshipped, as well those who have always been thought heavenly, as those whose merits have placed them in heaven, as Hercules, Bacchus, Æsculapius, Castor and Pollux, Romulus : 'Divos et eos qui cœlestes semper habiti, colunto : et ollos quos in cœlum merita vocarint, Herculem, Bacchum, Æsculapium,' etc.† and Macrobius, on Scipio's dream, saith 'that his soul hath been placed amongst the gods, because he never had forsaken virtue, but had, on the contrary, always practised it.'‡ It is the same with the saints, to whom the Church of Rome pays divine honours ; they believe them to be men whose merits have placed them in heaven, and are worthy of their homage, so that what Tertullian told the pagans may be applied to them both : 'We know whence your gods are. The towns they were born in, and where they died, bear witness of it.'§

The pagans were not allowed to offer up their prayers or vows but to such as the senate by their suffrages had placed

\* Part. IV., Cap. vii., qu. 3.

† Cic. de Legibus, Lib. II., and de Natura Deorum.

‡ Lib. II. Vide Plin. Hist. Nat., Lib. II., Cap. vii.

§ Tert. Apol., 40.

in the number of the gods ; their cause was pleaded before the tribunal of men, and if they did not prove favourable, they were not esteemed as gods. ‘The condition of each of your gods,’ saith Tertullian, ‘depends on the approbation of the senate ; those are not gods whom men have not decreed so to be, and who have been condemned by their sentence.’\* ‘Wonderful !’ saith the same author, in another place, ‘and from whence we take much advantage ; the Godhead among you depends on the approbation of man ; is not a God acceptable to man, he shall not be a God ; man must be favourable to his God.’† The saints of the Church of Rome are of the same stamp ; they cannot pretend to that quality without the consent of the pope and his consistory ; there it is that their cause must be pleaded, and if men do not prove favourable to them, they are not gods (*divi*). The popes Alexander and Innocent III. have assumed this privilege of canonizing whom they thought fit, forbidding the worshipping a saint who had not been approved by the authority of the pope.‡ Judge you, after this, have not the doctors of the Roman communion a good grace when they exclaim against the follies of the ancient senate, who assumed the authority of making its gods, since the pope and his consistory do in our days pretend to the like power ? and is not the Capuchin Yves very merry when he puts on his gravity, and with the air of a censor declaims thus : ‘To imagine that a decree of the senate may place a man in the Godhead as in a civil office is so gross an ignorance, and so abominable an impiety, that if all historians were not agreed

\* Ch. xiii.

† Apol., Ch. v.

‡ Lib. III., decr. tit. 45, Cap. i. Audivimus Bell. de Sanct. Beat., ib. I., Cap. viii.

in the proofs they give of it, it were not possible for a rational being to imagine it?\*' Either that Father could not see the beam in his own eye, or disowns what is practised in the Court of Rome.'

The pagans have deified the persecutors of Christians, as was the Emperor Maximianus Herculus, remarked by Baronius, in the year 307.† The pope hath done the same when he canonized Dominique and other such authors of the massacres of the faithful Albigenses.

As soon as the senate had placed a man in the rank of the gods, they paid him divine honours, offered up prayers and vows, built temples and altars, erected statues, offered up sacrifices, appointed holy days in honour of him, as Augustus did in commemoration of the victories of Julius Cæsar, his adoptive father. Thus, as soon as the pope has canonized one, the exterior worship, which is offered up to God, is paid him; his name, in the first place, is entered into the catalogue of saints—*i.e.*, they are ordered to be publicly called saints by all.‡ Secondly, they are called upon in the prayers of the Church. Thirdly, churches and altars are dedicated in memory of them. Fourthly, they offer up sacrifices publicly in honour of them, as well that of the Eucharist as the sacrifices of praises and prayers, which are called 'The Office.' Fifthly, holy days are celebrated in commemoration of them. Sixthly, their pictures are drawn with a ray of light, in token of the glory they enjoy in heaven. And, in fine, their relics, which are kept in precious shrines, are publicly honoured; and they even place them on altars, where they believe Jesus Christ to

\* Theol. Nat., Tom. iv., p. 155.

† Tom. iii., p. 23.

‡ Bell. de Sanct. Beat., Lib. I., Cap. vii.

be sacrificed ; they kiss and worship their ashes, their bones, their hair, and their clothes ; in one word, they do nothing in honour of God which they do not practise with as much, if not more, devotion in veneration of the saints. So that one may, with a great deal of truth, apply to them what Tertullian alleged against the pagans of his time : ‘What honours do you show your gods which you do not practise also to celebrate the memory of dead men ? You erect to the one and to the others temples and altars ; their statues have the same ornaments.’\*

When the zealous Roman Catholics are in some danger, they immediately make a vow to the Virgin Mary, or to some other saint whom they imprecate to their aid ; and if they happen to escape, in lieu of returning their thanks to God, they give all the glory of it to the saint, and take occasion from thence to rivet themselves the more firmly in their superstition. That of the pagans was the same. Pliny tells us a story of one Elpis, who, seeing a lion coming up to him with his mouth wide open, climbed up a tree and called aloud to Bacchus ; the lion came to the foot of the tree in the posture of a suppliant with his mouth wide open, wherein was a bone betwixt his teeth which he could not loosen ; the man, seeing this, came down presently and eased him of his pain without receiving any harm from the lion. From that time Elpis had so great a devotion for Bacchus that, as soon as he returned to Samos, he dedicated a temple to him.†

The devotion which the pagans had for their gods was so fantastical that they often cursed those they had the most veneration for. Lactantius acquaints us that at Linde, a town

\* Tertul., Ap. 13.

† Plin. Hist. Nat., Lib. VIII., Cap. xvi.

in the island of Rhodes, when the inhabitants commemorated the feast of Hercules, their tutelar god, they strove who should utter most curses and execrations against him; and if anyone by accident had uttered one kind word, the whole mystery had been spoiled.\* Sabellicus writes that the Mother of the Gods was honoured in the same manner; that is, by uttering against her such obscenity as would make the most abandoned strumpet blush. Many of the Romish churches have revived that custom. They pretend a great zeal for the honour of the Virgin Mary, yet there is no such blasphemy uttered against her amongst the Mahometans, as in Spain and Italy, where they call her by a name which is too shocking for me to repeat. I could not have believed it had I not read it in Bellarmine's treatise 'Of the Art of Dying Well': 'Inter Catholicos quantus est eorum numerus qui matrem Domini Virginem esse fatentur, et blasphemando meretricem appellare non timent.'†

Arnobius formerly taxed the pagans for forging themselves gods, the one a carpenter, others drapers, others mariners, fiddlers, cowkeepers.‡ One was a musician, another a midwife, a third knew the art of divination; the one was a physician, another president of eloquence; one followed the occupation of arms, another was a smith; and according to this distribution, everyone chose for his patron whom he thought presided over his occupation. The orators and poets worshipped Apollo, Minerva and the muses; the physicians, Æsculapius; the soldiers, Mars; the hammermen, Vulcan; the hunters, Diana. St. Augustine writes a whole chapter of the employs men had been pleased to

\* Lact. Inst., Div. l. i.

† Bellarm., l. i, c. 3.

‡ Arn. Contra Gent., l. 3.

assign their gods, which he thinks the most ridiculous thing imaginable.\* 'They cut out,' saith he, 'to every god his task, and according to that distribution they tell you you must direct your prayers, to each of them according to his office. Does not that look more like the buffoonery of a stage than the majesty of God?'† Whatever the absurdity be, the Church of Rome has not scrupled to do the like, assigning to every saint his office, and everyone choosing for his patron him whom he thinks to preside over his profession. The literati have chosen St. Catherine and St. Gregory; St. Thomas is the patron of the divines; St. Cosmus and Damian, of the physicians and chirurgeons; St. Yves, of the civilians or lawyers; St. Luke, of the painters; St. Eloi, of the goldsmiths and farriers; St. Eustache, of the hunters; St. Nicholas and St. Christopher, of the mariners; St. Euloge, of the jockeys; St. Cecil, of the musicians; St. Josse and St. Urban, of the ploughmen; St. Vendelin, of the shepherds; St. Anthony, of the swineherds; St. Crispin, of the cordwainers; St. Gutman, of the tailors; St. Goar, of the potters; St. Joseph, of the carpenters; and St. Leonard, of the locksmiths.

The pagans assigned to each of their gods the power of curing particular diseases. They prayed to Apollo against the plague; to Hercules against epilepsy, or fits; to Juno and Lucina in travail of children, etc. In like manner, the powers of the Romish saints are thus parcelled out. Against

\* August. de Civit. Dei, l. 6, c. 5.

† You will see many of these observations in the new edition of the 'False Face of Antiquity,' which was published in the year 1665. The author of that tract had made them six or seven years before, in a printed letter to his brother, etc. But as they are necessary to the present subject, it was thought fit to repeat them.

the plague, St. Sebastian and St. Roch are applied to ; against a fever, St. Petronella is invoked ; against poison, St. John the Evangelist ; and for the toothache, St. Apollonia ; for sore eyes, St. Otilia ; the nephritics, St. Liberius ; those possessed with the devil, St. Romain ; the epileptics, St. Valentine ; the prisoners, St. Leonard ; and women in labour, St. Margaret.

Among the pagans, every kingdom, city, and town put themselves under the protection of tutelar deities. Thence it was that when the Romans laid siege to a town they used to evocate the deity by some verses, to make him abandon the protection thereof. To this Virgil alludes when Æneas says, speaking of Troy :

‘Excessere omnes adytis, arisque relictis,  
Di, quibus imperium hoc steterat.’

—The gods who protected us with their immortal arms, have taken their flight and forsaken their altars.

For this reason, when Tyre was besieged by Alexander the Great, the inhabitants bound the statue of Hercules, the titular god of their city, with golden chains, for fear he should leave them. The Babylonians had Bel for their protector ; the Egyptians, Isis and Osiris ; those of Rhodes and Delphos, Apollo ; Rome, Jupiter Capitolinus, Mars, and Quirinus ; Ephesus, Diana ; Athens, Minerva ; the inhabitants of Crete or Candia, Jupiter ; those of Cyprus, Venus. France hath at this time for its protectors, St. Michael and St. Denis ; Spain, St. James ; Germany, St. Martin and St. Boniface ; Ireland, St. Patrick ; the Portuguese, St. Sebastian ; the Poles, St. Stanislaus ; the Muscovites, St. Nicholas ; the Bohemians, St. Wincellaus ; the Hungarians, St. Mary ; the Bavarians, St. Wolfgang ; the



Catholic Swiss, the Holy Virgin and St. Gall : and as to cities, Rome is under the protection of St. Peter and St. Paul ; Paris, under that of St. Geneviève ; Venice, St. Mark ; Naples, St. Thomas Aquinas ; Antwerp, St. Eligia and Nordbert : and almost all cities revere the Holy Virgin for their protectress ; for which reason the ' Garden of the Rosary ' hath these remarkable words : ' All sorts of people, of what sect or country soever, have a singular veneration for the gods who were their particular advocates and protectors, and offered them public sacrifices, with fine theatrical verses to their praises ; as, for example, the Olympians to Jupiter, the Cyprians to Venus, the Delphians to Apollo, the Thebans to Bacchus, and the Calabrians to Neptune, etc. With how much reason ought we, who are Christians, to praise, exalt, and magnify that great Princess of Heaven, the Queen of Men, Empress of Angels, and, to speak more properly, the Arch-monarch of the Universe ? '\* As to the other saints, some of them who are worshipped in one city are not so much as known in another, and consequently are far from receiving any honour from them, insomuch that what Tertullian said of the pagan gods may be applied to them : ' Is it not true that, among you, some worship certain gods which others do not ? You cannot deny but you do injuries to the gods whom you pay no honour to ? The preference you give to the one naturally produces a contempt to the other ; for when of two things you choose the one, it is most certain that which you do not choose you reject : thus you despise those gods you own not, and show you do not fear offend-

\* ' Garden of the Rosary,' at the beginning.

ing them when you refuse them the worship wherewith you honour the other divinities.\*

Minutius Felix ridiculed the pagans for the vile drudgery they put upon the gods whom they adored. 'Sometimes,' saith he, 'Hercules is set to empty dung; Apollo turns Admetus's cowherd; Neptune hires himself to Laomedon to build up the walls of Troy, and he is so unfortunate as not to be paid for his labour.' The same thing may be objected against those of the Church of Rome, who often set their most respected saints of both sexes to do jobs not only sordid but dishonourable, nay, even after they have been received in glory. Witness the glorious miracles they attribute to the Holy Virgin:† one time they make her come down from heaven to support an arrant thief on a gibbet, who was executed for his thefts, but who had shown a great devotion for her; another time, she comes down to mend the gown of St. Thomas of Canterbury that was ripped on the shoulder; another time, to wipe the sweat off the face of the monks of Clervaux while they work; at another time, she performs the duty of an abbess, whilst the abbess herself is strolling about the country with a monk who had debauched her; at another time, she comes to sing matins for a monk who had entreated her to supply his place; and at another time, they make her descend to bleed a young man in the arm.

\* Apol., Cap. xiii.

† See the fine tract of our Lady's miracles printed at Lyons.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OF CHURCHES.

It is without the least appearance of reason that we are associated with Anabaptists as enemies to churches, because some of our soldiers in the civil wars have destroyed some ; for these violences ought not to be charged to religion, but to the disorders of war, since Roman Catholics have shown no more moderation than Protestants on the like occasions, of which Rome itself had a woeful experience in the last century when taken by the army of Charles V. The Spaniards and Imperialists for cruelty or sacrilege far exceeded the Vandals and Aryan Goths ; they had no regard either to the name of Catholic, to the venerable name of prelate, or to sacred things.\* The cries of the Roman ladies and virgins, whom the soldiers were dragging through the streets by the hair, were everywhere heard. The ornaments of those famous churches, with the relics of martyrs, were cast on the ground and trodden under foot. Several prelates were dragged through the streets, with curses and hallooing, in their pontifical habits, and mounted on asses, riding backwards. The rage of the Spaniards extended even to the dead ; for they dug up the body of Pope Julius to take the

\* Mezeray, in the Life of Francis I.

pastoral ring off his finger. Clement VII., who then reigned, was taken prisoner, with the cardinals, who retired into the Castle of St. Angelo. Never did any Protestant troops commit the like ravages. Waiving, therefore, what hath been done in the heat of war, we proceed to examine what is to blame in the churches of the Roman Catholics. We are far from blaming them, and Cardinal Bellarmine\* wrongs us when he accuses us of believing that it is not allowable to build churches for the service of God. Our practice hath sufficiently demonstrated that we approve that among Christians there should be places called churches, or by any other name, for assemblies for the exercise of acts of devotion ; to administer the sacraments, and for the performance of public worship ; to sing His praises ; and as our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles scrupled not to go into the temple at Jerusalem, or into the synagogues, to preach the Word of God, so in what parts soever the Reformation hath been settled, and where it is received by the magistrates, as well as by the people, we, without any scruple, make use of those churches in which a superstitious worship was performed before. And as we are far from supposing any inherent sanctity in buildings, in walls, or any other inanimate things, we are in no fear of being defiled by them ; we use them for our conveniency and to shelter us from the weather.

Under the law, whilst the Church was in its infancy, and gathered together in a country of a small extent, there was a temple where God would be worshipped, and in which He gave the people marks of His divine presence. ‘ But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all

\* De Cultu Sanct., Lib. III., Cap. i.

your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come.\* But under the Gospel where the Saviour of the world hath invited all people to partake of His favours, this attachment to a certain spot of earth has been taken away, and our devotion is as good in one place as in another. Jesus Christ, who is the author of our religion, hath taught us that we are not now to be attached to Mount Gerizim like the Samaritans, or to the temple at Jerusalem like the Jews; but that God may be worshipped in whatsoever place we be; and provided we are there assembled in His name, He hath promised He will be in the midst of us, and His Apostle commands us to offer up our prayers everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.† Pursuant to this the first Christians assembled indifferently in all places where they most conveniently could—in private houses, in auditories (St. Paul is said to have preached for two years at Ephesus in the school of one whose name was Tyrannus), in caves, in woods, in burying-places, not doubting but that God who is everywhere and regards not the beauty of the place from which He is worshipped, but the sincerity of heart of His worshippers, would hear them in whatsoever place they were.‡

The Church of Rome thinks much otherwise, for they build churches not only for the conveniency of the Christians, but to dedicate them to God as a house wherein He dwelleth; they consecrate them with various ceremonies; they believe that God is in a more particular manner present in those buildings than in any other; and that the

\* Deut. xii. 5.

† 1 Tim. ii. 8.

‡ Acts xv. 9.

prayers and services done therein are more effectual than if done in other places. They erect altars, they fill them with images which they term sacred, and with relics ; they adorn them sumptuously and with a vast expense ; and because we do not copy after their example, they revile us as impious and profane, so that we are with them on the same footing that the Christians of the first ages were with the pagans. So that we may say to them what Arnobius said to these last : ‘ You use to impute it to us as a crime of vast impiety, because we do not build churches wherein to place the images of the gods, that we erect no altars, that we offer no sacrifices, that we burn no frankincense, and that we therein make no offerings of bread and wine.’ To this we answer in the words of that doctor : ‘ That our omission of these things proceeds neither from impiety nor a contempt of the Deity, but because we believe that the gods, if they are truly such, scorn those honours, or behold them with indignation if they be susceptible of anger.’

As to the building of churches to the Deity as the pagans formerly did, and those of the Romish Church do in our days, the vanity of that superstition can never be more effectually exploded than in the words of the same Arnobius : ‘ We ask of what use can temples be to the gods, to what purpose were they formerly founded, or why should any be now built ? Do the gods feel the frost of winter, or are they parched with the heats of summer ? Do they fear being wetted by the rains, or disturbed by whirlwinds ? Are they afraid of being exposed to the violence of soldiers, or the voracious appetites of wild beasts, that it is deemed necessary to lock them up in buildings for their safety, and to oppose

the rampart of walls for their defence? What are these churches, after all? If you consult the weakness of man, they are something very great and immense; but compare them to the greatness of the gods, they will show very small or rather narrow caverns which the invention of a weak brain hath put together. Be they composed of great masses of marble, be their ceilings garnished with gold and precious stones, be they so disposed and in such a large quantity as to give a faint image of the beauties of the firmament—all this is yet but earth, and drawn from the vilest part of matter. And although their price or scarcity makes them valuable to men, one cannot conclude from thence that they are acceptable to the gods, and that these gods are pleased with such gaudy garniture for their prisons. This you say is the temple of Mars, that of Juno or Venus, etc. Is not that doing the gods high injury to distinguish them by the name of their habitation? to assign them narrow lodges, to build them up conclaves and cells, and to imagine that they want these dwellings like men, like cats, like ants, like lizards, and like timorous rats?

The Church of Rome hath this in common with the pagans, for they consecrate their churches with ceremonies at least as superstitious. This will easily appear by comparing the one with the other. When the pagans were about to build a temple, they marked out the whole space intended for the fabric, and surrounded it with ribbons and garlands. The vestal virgins sprinkled the area with lustral water; the pontiff, who presided over the ceremony, said solemn prayers for the consecration of the edifice. The blood of beasts which were sacrificed on the area was added thereto;

the people gathered round it with boughs of bays in their hands; the pontiff, together with the priests, the senate and the nobility, laid the first stone, and silver and gold uncoined was cast thereon, as one may read in Cicero's oration to the pontiffs for his house, and in the fourth book of Tacitus's history, in the pleadings he makes for the restoration of the capitol. The ceremonies observed by the Church of Rome on the like occasion come very near the former, for the pontiff first sprinkles the whole place with holy water; instead of crowns or garlands he plants twelve crosses round the place, and before each of those crosses he sets a lighted taper; he blesses the first stone, and makes thereon several signs of the cross with many prayers; he places it himself in the foundation, he consecrates the place by pouring oil thereon,\* which Bellarmine alleges has at all times been the symbol of consecration.† During the whole ceremony the pontiff says many prayers for the consecration of each utensil, and, in fine, the sacrifice of the mass, as the soul of the whole ceremony, is repeated. For as the Decretal hath it: 'All temples ought always to be consecrated with saying mass;‡ to which purpose the glossary observes: 'That the sacrifice of the mass is essential to the consecration.'

It was an error of the pagans to imagine that the gods were more particularly present in their temples than anywhere else, and that the prayers and devotions offered up were anyways sanctified by the holiness of the place, or were ever a whit the sooner heard or more acceptable. 'We consecrate temples to the gods,' say they in Arnobius,

\* Pontif. Rom., Part II., *init.*

† Bell. de Cultu Sanct., Lib. III., Ch. v.

‡ Decret., Part II., Dist. i., Can. omnes, p. 1850.



‘not to shelter them from the rains, winds, frosts, or the heat of the sun, but that we may the nearer approach them, and speak to them, as it were, face to face, for they could not so well hear prayers offered to them in the open air, and under the canopy of heaven.’\*

The Roman Church has the same sentiments : ‘Deus est magis in templo quàm alibi,’ saith Bellarmine (*i.e.*, God is more in the temple than elsewhere), ‘et in templo citius exaudit’ (*i.e.*, and hears soonest in that place), saith the same author;† and it is with an intent of attracting the Deity within the walls of the temple that in the prayer used at the dedication they say : ‘Let Him pour forth His Holy Spirit, that the grace of His visitation bestowed on that place may spread all over it ; let Him continually fill that building with His grace ; let His eyes be open day and night on this house ; let Him accept and be propitious to those who come there to worship ; let Him enter into that house which, being consecrated to Him, is become His dwelling.’ Thus, believing that God is in a more particular manner present in those buildings, they are persuaded that their devotion performed there hath more virtue than that in other places ; for this reason they resort thither to say their prayers, and not only at the times of congregation, but even when therein alone. They imagine that to go to visit them for devotion is a meritorious, pious and devout work, as the Council of Trent declares.‡

The pagans often undertook long journeys in pilgrimage to the famous temples of their gods, in hopes that the prayers and sacrifices they should offer up there would be

\* Arn., Lib. VI.

† Bell. de Cultu Sanct., Lib. III., Cap. iv.

‡ Const. Trid., Sess. 25.

more effectual than those in the cities of their abode. Thus, the temple of the great Diana at Ephesus,\* and that of Apollo at Delphos, were resorted to, far and near. And in Sicily there was a temple of Ceres, whereof Cicero saith, that when people went there it looked more like going to Ceres herself, than to a temple dedicated to her.† Therefore, although there was a most magnificent temple dedicated to that deity at Rome, the decemviri and the pontiffs did from time to time send thither to make vows. It is well known that the custom of the Church of Rome is to do the like; for though their devotees have churches in the several places of their abode, they nevertheless go far in pilgrimage to offer up their vows to those who have the reputation of more sanctity.

The pagans not only consecrated temples to the gods, but also to men. They erected some in honour of their emperors after their decease, and others to those for whom they had great veneration, and called them by the name of the one or the other, saying (as Arnobius assures us) of the one, This is the temple of Juno; of the other, Apollo resides here; Hercules in that, and Summanus in the other. This doctor had scarce ventured to reprove the pagans had the Christians of his time consecrated churches to the honour of saints, as well as to God or to Jesus Christ. Bellarmine has established it as a most Christian maxim, which he labours by a multitude of arguments to support, that it is well done to consecrate houses, not only to God, but also to the saints;‡ and they nominate those churches from those in honour of whom they have been built—one St. Saviour,

\* Acts xix. 27.

† Act. VI. in Verrem.

‡ Bell. de Cultu Sanct., Lib. III., Cap. iv.

another St. Michael, Holy Mary, St. Paul, St. John, St. Stephen, etc. The first Christians were very far from that superstition; and although Constantine the Great be the first who built magnificent churches, it was with no other intention than to consecrate them to God and His service. 'He took care,' saith Eusebius, 'to adorn the world with sacred temples, etc., which he dedicated and consecrated to one only God, the Lord of the whole universe; therefore those temples were consecrated to him by the name of our Lord.\* Thus Augustine proves against the Arians that Jesus Christ is God, because temples are dedicated to Him.† 'Were we not accursed by the truth of Christ and the Church of God,' saith he, 'if we should make a temple of stone and wood to some saint or angel, how excellent soever; because we should then pay to the creature the service which we owe to God alone? If, then, we should be sacrilegious by building temples in honour of any creature whatever, why should we not acknowledge a true God, to whom we build temples, and of whom we ourselves are temples?‡ Would not the Arians have hissed such an argument had it then been the custom, as now it is, to erect churches in honour of men and angels?

The ancient Romans, in their battles, vowed temples to their gods if they gave them a happy issue out of danger and victory over their enemies.§ Thus, when Romulus perceived his men were giving ground in a battle with the Sabines, he vowed to build a temple to Jupiter Stator in case he inspired his soldiers with courage and stopped their

\* Eus. de Laud. Const.

† Aug. adv. Max. Arianos, Lib. I.

‡ Pontif., Part. II., de Impos. : primi Cap., p. 202.

§ Livy, Lib. I.

flight.\* This having succeeded to his wish, he acquitted himself of his vow. Appius, the consul, followed that example, when in the fight he prayed thus : ‘O Bellona, give us this victory, and I vow thee a temple.’† Several generals, as Sempronius and M. Marcellus, did the same. Many of the churches of the Romish Communion have been built on the same account, as was that of St. Vincent, by Clotarius and Childebert, after the defeat of the Goths;‡ that of St. Martin at Paris, by Henry I., for the happy success he had over Baudom, Count of Flanders, and several others.§

A doctor of the Church of Rome, of good esteem, who wrote in the last century, Pollet by name,|| hath observed that the churches of his days were taken from the model of the ancient Romans : ‘For they,’ says he, ‘were composed of what is now called *cella sanctior*, that is to say, the holy part, which we call the choir, distinguished from the basilic and porches by a separation, very truly called *pulpitum*, because it is raised in the nature of a pulpit. Some of the vulgar call it a throne, etc. The basilic is that which we call the nave or body of the church, and the walking places on each side, or aisles, are properly the porches of the ancients, and are like the deck of a ship. The most holy parts were solely destined for sacred things, but the basilic, the porches and vestibule, were mostly exposed to profane uses, for there were held fairs or markets in as profane a manner as in our days among us, and agreements of marriages made,’ etc. It were to be wished that they were not profaned in other matters, but everyone knows

\* Plut. in vita Rom.

† Livy, Lib. X.

‡ Sabell. Enn. VIII., Lib. III.

§ Gagn., Lib. V.

|| Franc Pollet, Lib. I. ; Hist. Fori Rom., Cap. iii.

that in Spain, and Italy especially, these are the places where the vilest matches are made, and that there is no less room now than formerly for the complaints of Minucius Felix against the pagans of his time : 'Where are more bawdy matches made than in the temples and near the altars ? Is it not there the filthiest bargains are made, and adulteries are mediated ? Does not impudicity reign more powerfully in chapels than in stews ?'

When the pagans built temples, they always placed the choir and the principal idols towards the east, as we may read in these words of Vitruvius : 'Let those who sacrifice towards the altars, look to the east part of the heavens, as also the statue which is to stand in the temple, etc., for it is necessary that the altars of the gods be turned to the east.\*' God, to take His people off from the imitation of the pagans, commanded in the construction of the tabernacle in the temple that the contrary should be done, and that the holy of holies, wherein the ark of the covenant was kept, should be placed at the west end. But the Church of Rome has chosen rather to conform to those than to the Jews.† 'When a church is built,' saith Bishop Durand, 'let it be so situated that the head may look to the east.'‡ Du Choul owns this conformity. The Romans turned towards the east as we do now, when they sacrificed and prayed. This Porphyry hath shown, who will have the entrance into the temples, and the statue, be erected to the east. And I think I have read the same in Vitruvius's 'Architecture,' where he speaks of the situation of the temples of the immortal gods. He hath regard to the passage before-cited.

\* Vitruv. Lib. IV., Cap. v.

† Ezek. viii. 16.

‡ Durand. Rationo, Lib. I., Cap. i., Num. 8.

It cannot be denied that from the same source is come forth the magnificent ornaments wherewith the churches have been embellished with so much labour and expense for so many ages. Human prudence, which spoils all when it sets about governing religion, made the Christians believe, after they found themselves freed from persecution, that the pagans were to be gained over by that exterior show they were before used to. But it hath so happened, that, thinking to attract them to the true religion, their superstitions have been introduced; and instead of forming men to piety and to raise their hearts on high, they have been made to remain in the admiration of walls and ceilings. It were to be wished that the wise remonstrance Lactantius made to the Christians on this subject had been remembered.\* ‘One only God was worshipped in the world,’ said he, ‘when those gods which you now worship were not yet born. This true God abominates malice and loves goodness. These stones and mortar are not His temples, but man himself, who bears His image; and this temple is to be adorned, not with gold nor corruptible gifts of precious stones, but with eternal gifts of all sorts of virtue.’ Have we not reason to apply to the luxury which the Church of Rome displays in every part of the decoration of their churches, in their vessels and images, what this ancient doctor reproached the pagans with? ‘The beauty of the gold, of the precious stones, and of ivory, dazzles the eyes of the world, who believe there can be no religion where these things are wanting. They come to their gods, not so much through devotion as for gratifying the lust of their eyes, to stare at that rich metal; so that the whole worship of God is nothing else

\* Lact., Lib. V., Cap. ix.

than what the covetousness of man admires.\* And what he saith in another place of the expense for adorning their images—‘They dress with veils and precious cloth what doth not want covering; they consecrate them gold and silver, which is as much lost to the donor as the receivers.’ Lactantius little dreamt that the Christians should at any time ever be guilty of the like folly; that those who should profess adoring one only, Jesus Christ, who lived and died in poverty, should change His religion for vain pomp and ornaments, which strike the eyes of the flesh alone, and should amuse themselves with adoring images and walls, whilst they left vast numbers of poor members of Jesus Christ naked and miserable.

Cardinal Baronius, in his ‘Roman Martyrology,’ observes that until Gregory I.’s time the Christians despoiled the temples of their idols, leaving them deserted, to testify their abhorrence of the service of devils;† but that Boniface IV., his successor (who was the first that assumed the title of Universal Bishop, which Gregory had so vehemently exclaimed against),‡ was of opinion that after taking away the idols of the pagans, their temples might be made use of, wherefore he accommodated himself with many, into which he conveyed the bones of martyrs which he had taken out of the burying-places of Rome. The Church of St. Michael was formerly that of Juno; the Church of St. Stephen, in the Ox Market, was built by the pagans in honour of Hercules; that of Holy Mary the Egyptian was formerly the temple of Fortune; that of St. Adrian was built for Saturn; but

\* Lact., Lib. II., Cap. vii.

† Ad Diem 13 Maij.

‡ *Antique Urbis splendor Impr. Rom. cum Privil. Papa. Ferreolus Locreus Mariæ, Aug. l. 4, c. xxvii.*

the Virgin hath profited most from the spoils of the pagans, for there are at this time no fewer than twelve temples consecrated to her, which heretofore were dedicated to false gods, viz. :

That of St. Mary in Ara Coeli, formerly dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius.

St. Mary Aventine, formerly dedicated to the Good Goddess.

St. Mary in the Capitol, formerly dedicated to Apollo Capitolinus.

St. Mary in the Oil Market, formerly dedicated to Hercules.

St. Mary of the Painted Hole, formerly dedicated to Venus the Victorious.

St. Mary in Equirio, formerly dedicated to Isis, in the Circus of Flaminius.

St. Mary of Fevers in the Vatican, formerly dedicated to Mars.

St. Mary of Graces, formerly dedicated to Vesta.

St. Mary at the foot of the Roman Market, formerly dedicated to Jupiter Stator.

St. Mary on the Minerva, formerly dedicated to Minerva.

St. Mary the New, formerly dedicated to Apollo and Diana.

St. Mary in the Portico, formerly dedicated to Saturn and Ops.

But the most considerable of all the ancient temples, and which hath been the best preserved, is that now called St. Mary la Rotunda, which the heathens called the Pantheon, and which they dedicated to Cybele and all the gods. This was consecrated by Boniface IV. to the Virgin Mary



and all the saints of both sexes,\* the feast whereof he settled by the name of All Saints, and placed it in the month of May, on that which was before the feast of Cybele. That feast hath been transferred by Gregory IV. to the 1st of November,† at the desire of Louis the Debonaire, because the time when the harvest is all taken in was thought more expedient than the month of May to feed the great multitude of people, who then, for the sake of devotion, resorted to Rome.

Augustin Steuchius, the pope's librarian, hath admired the change which hath been made of the pagan temples, and consecrated in honour of the saints. 'All things heretofore profane at Rome,' saith he, 'are they not now become sacred? Have not all the temples of false gods been converted into churches of saints? Is not the Pantheon, which was formerly the temple of all the idols, now the church of the Virgin Mary and all the saints? Hath not the temple of Apollo in the Vatican, where the bodies of the holy Apostles were buried, been converted into that of those very Apostles, as I have already shown, and many others? That of Castor and Pollux, in the Roman Market, is now the Church of St. Cosmo and Damien. All the profane ceremonies are now become sacred.'‡

He had spoke with more truth had he said that the face of paganism had only been changed, but the substance still remained entire at Rome, and that all the change it hath undergone consisted in this, that another name hath been given it.

\* Anno 607.

† Anno 835.

‡ August. Steuchius de donat Const., p. 269.

## CHAPTER IX.

OF ALTARS, RELICS, THE HOLY-WATER POT ; OF ASYLUMS ;  
OF VOTIVE PICTURES HANGING UP IN THE CHURCHES, BY  
THE PAGAN ROMANS CALLED TABULÆ VOTIVÆ.

HAVING considered the temples, or churches in general, let us now view their chief ornaments, and examine from whence they took their rise. The first things looked upon with veneration are the altars, which are in our days consecrated with great ceremonies, as well as in the heathen times, and for the very same purpose—that is, to offer sacrifices. It might be urged that this is an imitation of the Jews, and therefore, if herein the Church of Rome offends, it is with restoring one of the most important ceremonies of the Jews ; but this excuse cannot in the least avail her. For whereas among the Jews there was but one altar on which it was allowed to sacrifice,\* in the Church of Rome there are an infinite number, even several in the same church, and in some large churches more than forty or fifty ; and this they do in imitation of the pagans, who in the same temple consecrated sundry altars to the divinity there worshipped, as Virgil observes of the temple of Venus at Paphos, a town in Cyprus :†

\* Joseph., XII. 29.

† Æn. 1.

‘Centumque Sabæa  
Thure calent Aræ.’

‘With sweet perfumes an hundred altars smoke.’

The altar which was in the Temple of Solomon was consecrated to the honour of God alone, and it had been a horrible sacrilege to have raised one there in honour of any creature; but among the pagans this was very common. One may still see the inscription of an altar at Narbonne, which the inhabitants erected to the Emperor Augustus. As they dedicated temples to them, so they appointed priests and altars. And Suetonius observes that Caligula would have no creatures to be sacrificed on them but peacocks, wood-hens, pheasants, and others of the most scarce fowls.\* From them the Church of Rome has learned to raise altars in honour of men, and their images, as it appears in the prayer used at the dedication: ‘Be this altar sanctified in honour of the omnipotent God, and the glorious Virgin Mary, and all the saints, to the name and memory of N.’ (they name him to whom it is particularly consecrated); ‘in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.’ I think there will be no reason for complaint if we call this a most gross idolatry, since a pope hath pronounced it such long before. It was Innocent III. whose words, in his treaty of the ‘Mysteries of the Mass,’ are these: ‘The temples and altars appertain to the worship of Latria, etc. They ought not to be dedicated to saints in honour of God, for fear that doing otherwise were found not to contribute to the service of God, but to idolatry. Ne forté si secus agitur non Theosebia, sed idolatria committatur.’†

\* Suet. in Calig., c. xxii.

† Innoc. III., de Myst. Missa, Lib. III.

St. Augustin had the very same thoughts when he ridiculed the pagans for raising altars before their images, a thing commonly done in the Church of Rome, as if those inanimate statues were God. 'The altar,' saith he (about the middle of his sermon 'De Verbis Domini,' tom. x.), 'testifies that they take that statue to be God; for what else hath an altar to do there if the image is not believed a god? Let them not tell me it is no divinity, it is not God; I could wish the pagans were as well assured of that as we are; but the altar testifieth for whom they hold it.'

Of the many altars which are in the same church there is a principal one, which stands in the choir, called the 'great altar'; in like manner at Rome, whilst pagan, there was an altar which they called 'most great'—'ara maxima.'\* This was situated near the Ox Market, where people came to be sworn, and was held in very high veneration, because it had been consecrated by Hercules.

William Durand, Bishop of Mande, writes, in his 'Rational of Divine Offices,' that it is a custom, three days before Easter, to sprinkle the altars with wine and water, taking care there be more wine than water, otherwise the whole mystery would be spoilt.† This ceremony was observed by the pagans, who poured wine upon their altars in honour of their gods. 'Pray show us why you thus pour wine on your altars?' says Arnobius. 'Do your gods thirst, that their throats want to be moistened with that liquor? Is it, as at our meals we use to mix drink with our victuals, that, after having fed your gods with the flesh of victims, you

\* Dionysius Halicarnassæus, Lib. I.

† Durand, Rat., Lib. VI., Cap. lxxvi.

moisten their mouths with wine for better digestion ?\*\* Had that ancient doctor dared thus to ridicule the pagans if, in his time, the Christians had done the same ? Had he not foreseen that the raillery might have been retorted on him, by asking him if his God was thirsty, since, after offering Him bread, they pour Him out wine and water.

The altars are not only dedicated for performing thereon the precious sacrifice of the Mass, but likewise to be the receptacle of the relics of saints, which are two uses widely different : to lodge on the same altar Him who is esteemed the true God, the supreme Master as well of the saints as of heaven and earth, with relics—that is to say, with bones, ashes, hair, combs, old shoes, lanterns and rags. One cannot sufficiently wonder at that fantastical devotion. For would not a man be thought mad who, seeing the king seated on his throne, instead of paying homage to him alone, should fall on his knees before the nails or the breeches of an officer who had been dead some time, and who should put those fine relics on the throne near the king ? Is not the devotion of those far more stupid, who, believing the presence of the supreme Monarch of men and angels on their altars, do place about Him dead bones, wallets, or old clothes of His servants, which they reverence, kiss and worship with at least as great submission as Himself ?†

But because it is not my design to treat of relics in general, which others have done before,‡ neither to exaggerate the absurdity of the devotion paid to them, I

\* Arn., Lib. VII., p. 29, ex Edit. Bas., 1546.

† Dallié de Cultu, Lib. IV., Cap. i.

‡ Monsieur Bochat of Alençon, of Relics.

will content myself to show what conformity the Church of Rome hath with the ancient pagans. The Jesuit Vasquez saith that 'it is an undoubted truth among the Catholics that the relics of saints, whether they be part of them, as their bones, their flesh, their ashes, or other things which have touched them and belonged to them, ought to be worshipped, and deemed worthy of sacred honour.' The heathens never came up to this, though it be in imitation of them that men have by insensible degrees engaged in that excess of superstition. For, in the first place, they preserved with vast respect those things which had served their heroes in their lifetime, as at Rome the crooked stick called 'Lituus,' which Romulus used to hold in his hand whilst he observed the flying of birds, when he took the auguries, and wherewith he had traced the circumference of the city; for they had consecrated this staff on the Palatine Hill, and to make it more venerable, they vouched that it had performed miracles, as, among others, to have preserved itself entire in the midst of the ashes and ruins when the Gauls took Rome and set fire to all the houses thereabouts. But among the relics they revered chiefly the ashes of their heroes in those places where their bodies had been burnt, and their flesh and bones in those countries where embalming was the custom, as appears by what Plutarch relates of Theseus. 'The Athenians,' says he, 'reverenced him as a demi-god, and the oracle of Apollo, which they had consulted, answered that they should gather the bones of Theseus, and, putting them in an honourable place, should religiously preserve them, which obliged them to depute Cimon to go in search of his sepulchre, the place whereof was wholly unknown. That Cimon having discovered it by

means of an eagle, which had perched thereon, he carried his bones to Athens, where they were received with universal applause, with solemn processions and sacrifices.\* And Plutarch adds that these relics were still in Athens in his time. Thence it is that the Romish Church has learned to search the tombs for bones, instead of letting them rest in peace; and whenever they transfer such relics of saints, they do it with the same ceremonies as were practised by the Athenians—that is to say, with processions and sacrifices.

The custom of placing the bones and ashes of saints in churches is taken from the pagans, who used to erect altars near the graves of those they intended to honour, as appears by what Virgil relates in the third *Æneid*, that *Æneas*, in order to pay funeral honours to *Polidorus*, after he had erected a monument, had an altar built near it—‘stant manibus aræ.’ From thence the Fathers of the three first centuries take occasion to speak contemptuously of the pagan temples, commonly styling them sepulchres, as *Cecilius*, who contends for the pagans, complains in ‘*Minutius Felix*.’ ‘Shall we endure men,’ saith he, speaking of the Christians, ‘who mock holy things, and who fly the temples as they would graves?’ etc.

The reason alleged by the Council of Trent† to oblige Christians to worship relics is because men receive great benefit thereby. The same opinion the pagans had of the bodies of their heroes, believing them to be the protectors and tutelar gods of the places where they reposed. Thus *St. Epiphanius* relates that the pagans of Egypt paid their greatest devotion near the sepulchre where *Jeremiah* was

\* Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, toward the end.

† Council of Trent, Sess. 25; Decr. of the Invocation of Saints.

buried, because they thought he protected them from the crocodiles and from asses; and Ælian relates that there was a very great dispute among the successors of Alexander the Great, who should have his body, holding that in all places where it should be it would be attended with victory and safety. This, Arisstander, his chief soothsayer, affirmed, had been divinely revealed to him.

It is the custom among those of the Romish Church to swear by their saints and their relics. The pagans did the same, as Herodotus assures us of the Nasamones, who swore by those who had been the most just and honest men among them, by laying their hands on their sepulchres.\*

Besides altars, you find in the Romish churches a large stone vessel called the holy-water pot, full of water wherewith those who come in sprinkle themselves. This custom is derived from the pagans, as one may read in the third book of the 'Ecclesiastical History' of Theodoret,† who acquaints us that Valentinian (then captain of the guards, and afterwards emperor), accompanying Julian to the temple, the churchwardens (who stood at the door to sprinkle those who entered with lustral water) threw some on him, at which, having taken offence, he turned to one of them and gave him a box on the ear, 'believing,' saith the historian, 'rather to have been polluted than cleansed by that water,' for doing of which he was exiled. Du Choul assures us that the pagans had a water vessel for that same use. 'I have observed,' saith he, 'that at the door of the temples the Romans had a water vessel of fine marble set up, whence the priests and the people took out

\* Herod. Melpom.

† Theod., Lib. III., Cap. xv.



water at their going into the temples to offer sacrifices.’\* He afterwards gives us a draught of the vessel, and the sprinkling-brush, as they were taken from the antique. He tells us, moreover, of a portative water vessel, the fashion of which he hath taken from an antique marble, of which he hath a picture cut in wood in his book, with this inscription : ‘A small portative water vessel, such as that which we make use of in our churches.’

The temples and altars have not only been used by the pagans in honour of their gods, but they made them serve also for places of refuge for the greatest criminals. True it is that they had in Israel towns of refuge, but these were only for such as had killed by accident, without premeditate design, and not for wilful murderers. God commanded that these should be taken from the horns of the altar, and it was permitted to punish them in whatsoever place they were found.† The first Romans, that is to say, a band of robbers, gathered together to people their new city, gave sanctuary to those of their kind ; Romulus having promised impunity to all who should come to a temple which he had for that purpose erected in a wood ;‡ and since that all the altars in Rome had the same privilege, as it often occurs in Plautus, where the slaves who had committed any crime, says he, fly for shelter to the altars. This the Roman Church has imitated. ‘Under the law of the Gospel,’ saith Suares, ‘all churches, all churchyards, and religious houses are sanctuaries for guilty and criminal people, so that we have more of them than the Jews had, for theirs extended only to involuntary homicides, who could even be taken

\* Du Choul, p. 226.

† Exod. xxi. ; Numb. xxv. ; Deut. xix.

‡ Livy, Lib. I.

thence to trial ; but now these kind of sanctuaries extend almost to all sorts of crimes.\* True it is that in France the magistrates do not suffer it to be so much abused ; the convents there serve only for a retreat to bankrupts ; but in Spain and Italy the greatest criminals find in them an inviolable protection ; they make of those houses which they call the houses of God dens of thieves. It were to be wished that the popes would show as much equity as the Emperor Tiberius,† who, as much a pagan and bad as he was, finding that the impunity of those protections was the cause of great mischief, could not endure the abuse of them, abolished those privileged places by an edict.‡

It was a custom amongst the pagans, to testify their acknowledgment to their gods after they were cured of some dangerous sickness, or had escaped any eminent peril, to hang up in the temple of the god they had vowed to the clothes they had on during the danger, as also pictures, wherein were delineated the evils they were delivered from.§ This is what Horace alludes to in his fifth ode :

‘ Me tabula sacer.  
Votiva paries indicat humida  
Suspendisse potenti,  
Vestimenta maris deo.’

That is to say : ‘The sacred wall on which the picture of my vow is hung witnesseth that I have hung thereon my wet clothes in honour to the powerful god of the sea.’ And Tibulus, *Elegy III.*, lib. i. :

‘ Nunc dea, nunc succurre mihi, nam posse mederi  
Picta docet templis multa tabella tuis.’

\* Suares de Imm. Eccl., Cap. xix. et xx.

† Suet. in vita Tib.

‡ Tacitus.

§ See Hospinian de Origine Anathematum.

That is : 'Come, goddess, haste to my aid, for the many pictures hung up in thy temple do sufficiently show that thou hast the power of healing.' To this Juvenal alludes when he saith that the painters were fed by the goddess Isis : 'Pictores quis nescit ab Iside Pasci ?'\* All the world knows that the same custom still subsists in the Church of Rome. 'We hang up in the churches, to the memory of saints,' saith Molan, doctor of Lovain, 'arms, feet, and such-like things of wax, silver, and other materials ; others hang up pictures for a witness of the miracle.'† Polidore Virgil owns this conformity.‡ 'We hang up in our churches,' saith he, 'pictures on which are painted the miraculous things that have happened to us, for transmitting the memory of each to posterity. This comes from the Greeks, as Strabo assures us, among whom the custom was to hang up in the temples of the god who had succoured them, and particularly in that of Esculapius ; they also offered to Saturn and the gods small images.§ We do the like, offering small figures of wax to the church ; for as soon as we are afflicted in any part of our body, whether in hands, or feet, or breast, we immediately make a vow to God and to His saints, to whom, as soon as we are cured, we offer up such hand, or foot, or breast, done in wax. This custom is become so common that it hath passed from men to beasts ; for the Christians offer such images, in wax, for an ox, a horse, or a sheep ; of which some scrupulous people

\* Juv., Sat. 12.

† Molan de Hist. sac. Im., Lib. II., Cap. 1. ; Vide Vit. Theod. Sic. Metaph., April 22nd.

‡ Lib. V., Cap. i.

§ Geo., Lib. VIII.

may tell us that we therein imitate the superstition rather than the religion of the pagans, since Cato, in his "Treatise of Agriculture," acquaints us that the Romans made such vows for the oxen, which to him appeared the most ridiculous thing in the world.'

## CHAPTER X.

### OF IMAGES.

THE origin of images in religion proceed from the weakness of mankind, who will have sensible objects of devotion, 'and who believe it were vain,' saith Lactantius, 'unless they have before their eyes that which they worship.\*' However, God hath ever put this off from His worship, having expressly forbid His people to make any graven image, etc. But the devil, who is an enemy to His glory and to the salvation of mankind, hath, with all his power, fomented this inclination to idolatry, instigating the making of images as well of God as of His creatures, and the paying a religious homage to them.

This he hath generally established among the pagans, from whom their religion proceeded ; for, as Gregory of Neo Cæsareasaith, 'the pagan religion is the inventor and mother of images ;' and from them it passed to the Christians, as Eusebius shows in the seventh book of his 'Ecclesiastical History,'† when speaking of a statue which stood in his time in the town of Cæsarea, representing Jesus Christ with the woman whom He cured of the bloody flux. He adds that it is not surprising that people among the pagans who had

\* Lact., Lib. II., Cap. ii.

† Eus. Hist. Eccles., Lib. VII., Cap. xviii.

been miraculously cured by Jesus Christ and His Apostles should have erected the like monuments, because it was a custom of the pagans to pay such honours to those whom they held for their deliverers. George Cassander, a very learned divine of the Romish Church, in his Consultation addressed to the Emperors Ferdinand and Maximilian, on the controversies between the Catholics and Protestants, ingenuously acknowledges that the Church of Rome has herein imitated the pagans. 'The matter is too obvious to need a more particular explanation. The worship of images and of statues,' saith he, 'is come to too great an excess, and there hath been too much condescension in stooping to the inclination, or, rather, to the superstition of the people; for ours come nothing short of the utmost excess of folly the heathens have fallen into, whether in the making of their images, the adorning, or in paying supreme adoration to them.' If they become nicely to be compared together, one will find that there is no exaggeration in the discourse of this doctor.

The greatest absurdity of the pagans in this case was in making representations of the Deity, and in that they changed, as the Apostle speaketh, the glory of the incorruptible God into the resemblance of corruptible man. For this reason it was that Isaiah asked the idolatrous of his time with bitterness: 'To whom then will ye liken God? and what likeness will ye compare unto Him?' etc.\* Truly, it is not with God as with His creatures. These, because they are compound and finite, may be pictured and represented, if not with regard to their very essence, which is not an object of the senses, at least with regard to the accidents

\* Isa. xl. 18.

wherewith it is overcast, and by which it makes itself sensibly known. But a spirit, so very pure and innocent as God is, in whom there are no accidents or any other thing discernible by the senses, it is absolutely impossible to represent Him. Tertullian speaks of that attempt with so much horror as to say that it is not God they represent, but the devil whom they embody ('*dæmoniis corpora conferunt*'\*); yet the Church of Rome is guilty of this fault, they making representations of the Holy Trinity, which they even put as a frontispiece to their Bibles, as well that of Sixtus as of Clement VIII., though God in these very Bibles saith: 'Take you therefore heed of ourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest you corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male and female.'† Notwithstanding this prohibition, the doctors of the Church of Rome dare maintain that it is allowable to represent the image of God the Father in the likeness of an old man, and that of the Holy Ghost under the similitude of a dove. 'The father,' saith Sanders,‡ 'having appeared formerly as the Ancient of Days, may be pictured thus now: the Son also hath a human nature, in which He may be represented. And the Holy Ghost hath at one time assumed the likeness of a dove; at another, cloven tongues, as of fire. Those who represent the Trinity with such figures, with colours artfully disposed, mean nothing more than what the authority of the Scriptures permit and command.' Cajetan, Ambr. Catharin,

\* *De Idol.*

† *Deut. iv. 15, 16.*

‡ *Sanderus, de Ador. Imag., Lib. I., Cap. iv.*

Diego Payva, Thomas, Valdensis, Moland, and Bellarmin hold the same sentiment : read this last in his treatise of images and saints,\* where he endeavours to prove this impiety by reasons.

Besides the images of the gods which the pagans set up, they made some of their heroes, whom they styled demi-gods, as also of those they called dæmons, whom they believed to be mediators betwixt the supreme god and men. Thus the Church of Rome, besides the images of the Trinity, make others of angels and of saints, whom they invoke as their intercessors.

The materials wherewith those made their images were the same which are now employed, and subject to the same accidents, and the ancient Fathers have said nothing in derision of those of the pagans which does not suit with those of God, of the angels, and of the saints. One may say of them with Tertullian : ' We find no other fault with your images but that they are of the same substance with our vessels and common utensils, etc. These cold statues are so perfectly like the dead they represent, that the owls, the rats, and even the spiders, perceive it.'† And with Octavius in Minucius Felix : ' What opinion have the mute beasts of your gods ? They perceive and know that they have no sensation ; they tread and sit on them ; and if you did not drive the birds away, they would make their nests in the mouth of your god. The spiders cover their faces with their webs, and fasten their threads to their heads.' And farther with the same author : ' If a man will take a review how these figures are made, and in what manner they are carved, he will be ashamed to show fear for a thing on

\* Lib. II., Cap. viii.

† Tert. Apolog.



which the hand of the artist hath thus played. That god of wood, that may be the remainder of a wood pile or of a gibbet, is hung up, carved, planed, and smoothed. If of silver or copper, it may be made of a kettle or something more vile, and hammered out upon an anvil. That of stone is hewed, fashioned, and polished, sometimes by the hand of a wicked man. And as it doth not feel the hurts which are done it at its birth, so is it as ignorant of the honours paid it after consecration.'

Arnobius\* ridicules the equipage and the sundry postures in which they represented their gods, for painting their Jupiter Hammon with horns; Saturn with a sickle; Bacchus with a cup; Silenus mounted on an ass, with the countenance of a drunkard; Mercury as a messenger, ready for a journey; Vulcan with a hammer and other smith's tools; Apollo with his fiddle; Neptune with a trident; Juno with a peacock; Minerva with a helmet on the head and a spear in the hand; Ceres with a wheatsheaf, etc. By reason of this that doctor tells them: 'Should you take from your gods their equipages, they would not be known; one might easily mistake one of them for another.'† May not the same be said of the images the Church of Rome makes of their saints? representing Moses with horns; St. John and St. Barbara with a chalice in their hands; St. James with a pilgrim's staff; St. Peter with keys; St. Paul with a sword; St. Genest with a fiddle; St. Anthony with a book, a swine, fire, and the letter T; St. Genevieve with a candle and a devil at her feet; St. Fabian with a dove; St. Agnes with a lamb; St. Patrick with serpents; St. Gertrude

\* Arnob., Lib. VI.

† *Vide* Molan de Hist. Sanct. Imag., Lib. II.

with rats ; St. George with a dragon, in the equipage of a knight ; St. Catherine with her father, whom she treads under her feet ; St. Eloy with a hammer ; St. Nicholas with three children—nobody being able to assign reasons for it. But what is more filthy and dangerous in this imitation is, that as the pagans often made lascivious representations of their gods—witness their Venuses and their Cupids, their satyrs and keepers of gardens, which St. Augustin taxes them with when he produces the passage of Terence where a young debauchee excites himself to luxury at the sight of a picture representing the loves of Jupiter and Danae\*—they expose, even in the churches, pictures more proper to raise concupiscence than devotion. This evil is so common and so heinous that the most passionate partisans of these abuses cannot forbear complaining thereof. It is upon that subject that Ambrose Cantharin, Bishop of Minori, one of the divines who appeared most in the Council of Trent, exclaims thus : ‘What is most detestable at this time is that you will find in churches and chapels pictures so lascivious that one may plainly see the most shameful parts of the body, which nature had concealed. These are more proper to raise the luxury than the devotion of the most mortified flesh.’†

The pagans, after the statue was finished by the carvers’ art, consecrated the same with solemn prayers, ‘and immediately, as if the fate thereof had been changed by consecration (as Tertullian in his ‘Apology’ says) they pay their homage to it, which they had not done before. Minucius Felix gives it a genteel turn. ‘It is melted,’ saith

\* August. de Civ. Dei, Lib. II., Cap. vii. Teren. in Eun.

† Cath. de Cultu Imag.

he ; 'it is cast ; it is carved ; it is not yet a god. It is southered ; it is built ; it is dressed out ; nor is it yet a god. In fine, it is consecrated, it is prayed to ; then it is a god, when man would have it so, and has dedicated it.' It is the same with the images of the Church of Rome ; before they come to be consecrated they have no more reverence paid them than is paid to a log or a stone ; but after they have been consecrated it is no more a mass of stone ; it is a god, or a saint, or saintess to which the same honour is due as to the object it represents, as St. Thomas\* and Bellarmin† both assert. To those of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the worship of Latria ; to that of the Blessed Virgin, the worship of Hyperdulia ; and to those of the saints, the simple service of Dulia ; so powerful is the virtue of consecration, 'that by that,' saith the same St. Thomas, 'things inanimate acquire a spiritual virtue, which makes them fit for the service of God.'‡

The condition of images having thus been changed by consecration, superstitious people have not looked on them since but with veneration. The bigots of our time carry them about in procession through the streets on solemn days ; and on these occasions the people are seen to prostrate themselves, and deem themselves happy if they can but touch or rub their beads on them. One reads in Baruc that the Babylonians, at the time the Israelites were captives among them, did the same. 'Now shall you see,' saith he, 'in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon men's shoulders, which cause the nations to fear.

\* Thom., Part III., Quest. 25, Art. 3.

† Bellarm. de Imag. Sanct., Lib. II., Cap. x.

‡ Thom., Part III., Quest. 85, Art. 3.

Beware, therefore, that ye in no wise be like to strangers, neither be ye afraid of them when ye see the multitude before them and behind them worshipping them. But say ye in your hearts, "O Lord, we must worship Thee." \* And Eustathius, on the first Iliad of Homer, tells us that at Diospolis, in Egypt, there was a great temple dedicated to Jupiter, from which the Ethiopians came yearly to take the image of Jupiter, and the other gods, carrying them in procession round the country of Lybia, and continued that solemnity for twelve days, as it were in honour of their twelve gods.

They light in the Church of Rome tapers and lamps before the images; and when the devotees are in danger they vow a taper to some certain saint, if by his means they may escape it. Witness that Irishman of whom Pogge of Florence saith, that he, being at sea in a storm, vowed a taper to the Virgin Mary as big as the ship's mast, but one alleging that was more than he should be able to perform, the Irishman, whispering, told him, 'Be not troubled at that,' saith he; 'if I escape, the good Virgin will be satisfied with a farthing candle.' † I know not whether the heathens played thus with their gods; but certain it is that it was their custom also to light up candles before their images, as may be read in Baruc, where he speaks of the Babylonian idolatry: 'They light up candles before their idols; yea, more than for their own use, of which those idols cannot see one, no more than the beams of the house.' ‡ Cardinal Baronius excuses this superstition in the same manner as the pagans did, by citing the words of Seneca, who saith,

\* Chap. vi.

† Pogge in Facettius.

‡ Chap. vi.

that if they light up candles in the temples it is not because their gods have need of light, but that such is done for devotion.\*

The ancient idolaters kissed their images as a mark of religious veneration, as is taught in the sacred writings, where God, speaking to Elijah of those who were not guilty of idolatry, says: 'Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees of whom have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.'† And from these words of Hosea: 'And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver; and idols according to their own invention, all of them the work of the craftsman. They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.'‡ Thus Cicero, in his fourth book against Verres, among other sacrileges he accuses that man of, charges him with having robbed the Agrigentines of a brazen statue of Hercules, which was held for many years in so high veneration that its chin and mouth were quite worn with kissing it.§ It was on the like subject that Prudentius, an ancient Christian poet, contemporary with St. Augustin, ridicules the pagans of his time, who went to kiss the legs of the horses of a statue representing Apollo in his chariot.|| The most celebrated saints have had the same devotion for their images. Francis de Salle, lately made a saint, gives this charge to his Catholics, as one of the principal preservatives against sin, viz., often to kiss the holy images, as the crucifix and others.¶ And the Abbot Ceris, in the 'Life of Cardinal Berule,' observes that he had

\* Baron. Ann. Eccles., Ann. 58, 28.

† 1 Kings xix. 18.

‡ Chap. xiii. 2.

§ Orat. de Signis.

|| Lib. I., cont. Symmac., Epig. 13.

¶ Fr. de Sales in his Advert. to Confessors, Ch. viii.

always about him several images of saints, which he had almost worn out with kissing.\* The greatest comfort the confessors offer the sick on their death-bed, or to criminals who are going to be executed, is that of giving them a crucifix to kiss.

The prophet Jeremiah, laying before the people their idolatry, accuses them of saying 'to the stock, Thou art my father; and to the stone, Thou hast begotten me.'† Those of the Church of Rome do the same when they fall down before crosses or images of wood or stone, when they often with counting their beads repeat 'Pater noster,' etc. And as the prophet Hosea said of those in his time: 'They have made their petitions to wood,'‡ in like manner these ask of a figure of wood all spiritual and temporal happiness, as if it had the power to gratify their desires. 'We speak to the cross, and pray to it,' saith St. Thomas, of the Church of Rome, 'in the same manner as we should do to Him who was crucified thereon.'§ In the Holy Week they direct this prayer to it: 'O crux ave, spes unica, hoc passionis tempore. Auge piis justitiam, reisque dona veniam' (I greet thee at this time of the passion, O cross, my only hope; increase the holiness of the just, and forgive the guilty). And in another prayer, which they make to what they call the holy handkerchief given to Veronica, they require of this image to purge them of all spots, and enlighten their hearts by the power it hath, and conclude with: Conduct us, O most blessed figure, into our proper country, where we may behold the pure face of Christ—

\* Book III., Ch. v.

† Jerem. ii. 27.

‡ Hosea iv. 12.

§ Thom. par. Sum. Quest. 5, Art. 4.

‘Nos deduc ad propria, felix figura, ad videndam faciem quæ est Christi pura.’\*

Minucius Felix ridicules the Egyptians on account of the strong passion they showed for their idols, which were sundry animals of the air, the sea, and the land. ‘Strange is their delusion, for,’ saith he, ‘they would put a man to death who should have killed one of them.’ This is verified by the following example related by Diodorus† and Strabo,‡ that even in the time when Ptolemy, King of Egypt, was declared a friend of the Romans, and endeavoured by all means to cultivate their friendship, he could not prevent their putting to death a citizen of Rome for having killed one of the cats they adored, though undesignedly. The Athenians also condemned to death one Atarbe for having killed a sparrow which was consecrated to Esculapius, as Ælian hath related it.§ This appears very extravagant, and nobody but must abhor such cruel superstition of idolaters. But I appeal to every man’s conscience, whether the Church of Rome hath used more moderation, and is the conduct of her votaries more reasonable—they who have spilt so much blood to vindicate their images? In their opinion, it is the most horrid sacrilege to touch them, and which deserves the most cruel death: the murderer of a man shall only incur the gallows, but if anyone had temerity enough to cut off the nose of an image, the most exquisite torments would be used upon him, of which there were many examples in the last century, to mention none but such as have happened in this kingdom (France). One John le Clerc having dared to pull down a little statue,

\* Antid. Anim. f.

† Diod. Sic., Lib. I., Chap. vi.

‡ Strabo, Lib. XVII.

§ Ælian, Lib. V., Var. Hist.

which was placed in a chapel near Metz, whither the people were to go next day in devotion, was surprised, and that moment condemned. His hand was cut off, his nose torn from his face with red-hot pincers; he was pinched in the arms and breast, and then burnt with a slow fire.\* Was ever so much fury seen? The pagans did not even spare little children to revenge the violation of their idols. Pausanias† acquaints us that in a town of Arcadia called Condylea there was a temple of Diana; some children having found the door of it open, went in and took out a little statue of that goddess; wherewith they played, dragging it after them, with a packthread tied round its neck. The idolatrous inhabitants could not look upon it as children's play, but notwithstanding the innocency of their age, they were condemned to die, and accordingly were all stoned to death.† I cannot doubt but all reasonable people of the Church of Rome will blame this cruelty; nevertheless, there was one lately seen very much like it, in the city of Orange, where a boy of eight years and seven months old was on a Sunday most cruelly whipped at the corner of every street, not for having pulled down an image, for if so, doubtless, he had not come off so well, but for having been accused (though falsely against his constant negation) of making water in a stall in the chapel of the Capuchins. The child's name was Louis Villeneuve, son to a soldier of the garrison. This happened on the 8th of July, 1663.

The pagans used to give us sundry relations of miracles wrought by their images, to make the people have the more veneration for them. They said of one that it came down from heaven, as the Palladium, or image of Pallas, which,

\* Portraiture of Beze.

† In Arcadicis.



whilst King Ilus was building the temple, came down from heaven, and lodged therein of its own accord, and was since by Æneas brought into Italy, conveyed to Rome, and placed in the temple of Vesta, as the tutelar deity of the city and empire. Of others they told us that they had been heard to speak, as of the Juno of Veiës, for when the Romans were about carrying it to Rome, they asked the image if it were willing to go, whereupon it nodded—‘adding to the fable,’ saith Livy, ‘that it had been heard to say these words: Yes, I will.’\* Valerius Maximus relates as improbable a story of an image of Fortune. Some statues they affirm to have wept, others to have sung—witness the celebrated statue of Memnon, of which Cælius Rhodig. relates so many wonders.† They attributed to them the power of curing those who prayed to them of all sorts of diseases, or to afflict such as despised them with all sorts of misfortunes—as that of Pelicus, which Lucian derides in his dialogue entitled ‘The Liar.’ They maintain that some have been found sweating, as Cicero tells us of the statue of Apollo, at Cumæ of Campania; that of Victory, at Capua; that of Mars, at Rome, during his consulship.‡ Virgil relates the like miracle of the Palladium, and Dion Cassius writes, that in the consulship of Cn. Corvinus and of Valerius Messala, among other prodigies, ‘the statues sweated.’§ The same author tells us|| that it happened again before the Battle of Mutina; and the commentator of Appolonius Rhodius assures us that before some great

\* Tit. Liv., Lib. V., towards the middle. Val. Max., Lib. I., C. ult.

† Cæl. Rodigin, Lib. XXII., Cap. v.

‡ Cicero de Divini, Lib. I., near the end.

§ Hist., Lib. IV.

|| Lib. XLIII.

event the statues are commonly seen to sweat, as he saith it happened at the time of the battle of Philip, at Chæroneæ, against the Athenians. The pagans give us accounts of their images still more miraculous; that drops of blood have frequently fallen from them, as is told of a statue of Anthony, on Mount Alban, which at the time of the war of Augustus against Cleopatra, bled, as a presage of Anthony's death.\* Those of the Romish Church give out such-like miracles of their images. Some, they say, came down from heaven, as that of our Lady of Liesse, which was brought down by the Virgin Mary herself, accompanied with an army of angels, to three brothers, who were prisoners at Cairo, by whom it was brought into France; and that of our Lady of Montferrat, which was found in a cave surrounded by angels, who were singing and serving her, when men had not yet worshipped her.† Some they have (if credit may be allowed to what they tell of them) which give the lie to the prophet when he saith that 'the statues have mouths and yet speak not.'‡ For theirs have spoken several times, many examples of which may be found in their legends. It is said, in the 'Life of Thomas Aquinas,' that the image of a crucifix signified his approbation of the third part of the 'Theology' of that doctor, entitled 'The Sum,' in these words, 'Thomas, thou hast written well of me.' Baronius acquaints us that towards the latter end of the year 975 a synod was held at Winston, in England, for settling a great contest betwixt the married priests which had been deposed and the monks who had been substituted in their places. In the heat of the dispute, as the

\* Ferreol Locr., Lib. IV., Cap. lxxi.

† *Id.*, Cap. xxv.

‡ Ps. cxv. 5.

king and several bishops interceded for restoration of the priests, there happened, saith the historian, a wonderful thing, viz., the image of the crucifix (placed in the middle of the church) called out aloud, in the hearing of everyone : 'Non fiet, non fiet ; judicasti bene, mutaretis non bene' (Do it not, do it not ; you have judged right, you do wrong if you change). It is not the image of the crucifix alone which hath had that virtue, for the images of the saints of both sexes have not been silent. Cæsarius\* relates a wonderful example of it, of a man named Theophilus, who had given himself to the devil, to avoid poverty, and passed a contract, in form of a deed of gift, signed with his blood, and sealed with the seal of the devil. This wretch some time after repented of his having so rashly bound himself to so bad a master, and came to ask pardon for so heinous an offence of an image of our Lady, holding a little Jesus in her arms. Our Lady's image was easily prevailed with to forgive him, but that of Jesus frowned, and put him back from Him to the master he had bound himself to ; which the Virgin's image seeing, made this compliment to Jesus, 'My most sweet Son, take pity of this man, who was seduced by infirmity.' The child replied nothing to this first speech of the Virgin, but turned away His face. She, without losing heart, put her Son on the altar, and bowing to His feet, prayed with more earnestness, 'I beseech you, my dear Child, to pardon this sin, for my sake.' Then did the Lord bid His mother rise, and told her, 'See there, I forgive him for your sake.' Read but the acts of the Council of Nice,† and you will find all sorts of miracles, which

\* Cæsarius, Lib. II., Cap. xii.

† Sym. Nic. 2, Ax. 4.

those good Fathers acquaint us have been wrought by their images. Here follow some of which we take notice because they are conformable to those the pagans have boasted of. A lady of Cæsarea having mocked the relics and the image of St. Anastasius, was instantly struck with horrible pains all over her body, but having acknowledged her fault, and gone to cast herself on her knees before the image of that saint, she was presently cured. A Jew having with a knife pricked the side of a crucifix, there issued forth from it so great abundance of water and blood that they filled several pails with it, and all that were anointed therewith miraculously recovered health. Paralytics, the blind, the lame, the dumb, the leprous, and all diseased people who had access thereto, were perfectly cured. This made Constantine, the Bishop of Cyprus, one of the Fathers of that Council, after he had heard those miracles related in the assembly, say with admiration: 'We ought to learn from thence that the images of the saints are not only venerable, but that great advantages for the cure of diseases may accrue from them.' The same Constantine entertained the company with the vengeance an image of the Virgin Mary had taken of a man who had insulted it. 'This profane wretch,' saith he, 'having entered a chapel, on the wall whereof was painted a Virgin Mary, struck the image with the goad wherewith he pricked his oxen, which put out one of her eyes; but no sooner was he gone out, when goading his oxen, the point broke, and flew into his own eye, and put it out.'\*

As to the miraculous sweating of images so frequent among the pagans, such has also happened to those of the

\* Const. Eipr. Epist. in Con. Nic. Act. 4; Alan., Cap. iv. ; Dial., Cap. xv.

Church of Rome, and in a manner more profitable, for as those sweated out fair water only, those of the moderns have flowed with oil, as Peter Comestor tells us of a Virgin Mary taken out of a house of office (into which a Jew had cast it) and put into a church, where oil dropped from all the parts of her body.\* They have also bled, as well as those of the pagans, several examples whereof were related in the Council of Nice, to which I could add many more if I was not afraid of tiring the reader with such old wives' tales. Nevertheless, as my business is to point out the conformities of the modern with the ancient superstitions, I will not omit one miracle, which the Abbot Trithemius† assures us happened in the year 1325, of a Jew who struck an image of the Virgin Mary on the face with a dagger, whereupon the blood was seen instantly to flow in great abundance from the wound, which having been gathered up by the faithful, served for the cure of many diseases. The infidel who had given the blow remained for some time undiscovered, but at last the Virgin appeared in a dream to a locksmith, showing her wounds and naming the wretch who had so barbarously treated her, with a vehement exhortation to revenge her and to challenge her murderer. The smith, when awake, went to the judge, with this complaint against the Jew, and because there were no proofs sufficient, he was permitted to fight him. The success turned to the advantage of the Christian, who, being assisted by the Virgin, laid his enemy on the ground, who seeing himself worsted, confessed his crime, and from the field of battle was conveyed to the gallows.

\* Pet. Comest. tract. de Lud. Virg., Cap. cxxxvii.

† John Trithem. in Chron. Monast. hirsaug.

If we come now to examine the reasons for which images have been made use of in religion, they will be found to have been at all times the same. If you ask those of the communion of Rome what could have induced them so highly to violate the express prohibitions God hath made in many places of His Book to set up images in religion, they will answer : The reason is because they are the books of the illiterate, that there are no better means to instruct them with facility in the mysteries of religion. This consideration made Pope Gregory I. maintain against Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, that they ought to be put up in churches. 'What the Scriptures are to those who can read,' saith he, 'pictures are to idiots, because they there may see what they must follow ; therein those who have no learning may read.' When the first Christians put such questions to the pagans, they made them the same answer : 'Those who contended for images,' saith Arnobius, 'used to say that the ancients were not ignorant, that images had nothing divine in them, and were utterly void of sensation, but that they acted wisely and usefully in making them, because of the rude and ignorant populace, who make up the greatest part of cities and states, that, seeing, as it were, an appearance and form of the Divinity before them, they might be induced by fears to divest themselves of their rudeness and barbarity.'\* And Porphyry, in 'Eusebius,' saith, in express terms, 'that images are the books of the ignorant.' Theodoret on this subject acquaints us 'that the devil was the instigator of images, for the use of those who have not the knowledge of letters, to draw them by that means to superstition.'† He

\* Arn., Lib. VI.

† Theodor., Serm. VII. de Sacrif.; Serm. VII. ad Græc. infideles.

was much in the right there, since the Scripture saith that 'Wood only teacheth vanities, that images are doctors of lies,\* and that God commanded Isaiah to 'cast images to the moles and to the bats,† as blind works to blind animals.

Among the pagans, the common people, who are always very rude, worshipped statues of metal, of stone, or of wood, as they did God Himself, imagining that their nature was changed by consecration ; but the most learned had less extravagant sentiments. They distinguished betwixt the image and its original, and averred that the image itself ought not to be worshipped, but the Divinity represented by the image. 'There is nobody,' saith Celsus in 'Origen,' 'unless he be very silly indeed, who believes those things to be gods ; they are no other than symbols of the Deity, and we only adore them to the honour of God.‡ And in 'Arnobius,' the pagan tells the Christian, 'Thou mistakest ; we believe not the brass, gold, or silver to be God, and the other materials of which the statues are made to be in themselves God ; but we serve God in them, and we reverence those who come to dwell in them by virtue of consecration.§ All the world knows that things are much in the same state in the Church of Rome, except that the learned of the pagans were ashamed of the idolatries of the common people, who confounded the images with God, and paid them the same adoration ; very celebrated doctors were found who ranked themselves among the ignorant,

\* Jer. x. 8.

† Is. ii. 20.

‡ Orig. contra Celsus., Lib. VII., pp. 387 and 285, 292.

§ Arn., Lib. VI., p. 229, Ex. Edit. frob. See also Lact., Lib. II., Ch. ii.

and taught that the image and what it represents must be worshipped in the same manner. This was the opinion of Constantine, Bishop of Constance, in the second Nicene Council, who declared aloud, without being contradicted, saying: 'As for my part, I pay the same adoration to the image which is due to the enlivening Trinity, and whoever shall refuse to do the same, I anathematize him, as Marcion and Manes.\*' One reads these very words in the book Charlemagne wrote against that synod, pursuant to which it was decreed 'That they are not two adorations, but one only—that which is paid to the image, and to him whom the image represents.' They are now ashamed of so gross a superstition, and although they still persist in the sentiments of that council, yet when the party-men for images fall upon this topic with some of our people, they endeavour to persuade them that they do not worship the image, but Him whom it represents, and if any do otherwise, it is a fault of some few, which ought not to be imputed to their whole Church. But whatsoever pretence they may use to shelter themselves beneath, their conduct sufficiently discovers their true sentiments. What kind of honours could they pay to the Deity more than they do to images? Do they show any veneration to the sacrament of the Eucharist, which they believe to be the true God, which they do not pay to images? Do not they fall down before them? Do they not crown them? Do they not adorn them? Do they not offer incense to them? Do they not light tapers before them? Do they not carry them in procession? Do they not set them on their altars? Do they not go in pilgrimage to them? Do they not put their confidence in

\* Act IV., almost at the end.



them, as in things whose nature is changed by consecration, and that have received a supernatural and divine virtue? The abuse is so glaring that their divines are forced to own 'that several Christians reverence the saints of both sexes in the same manner as they reverence God.'\* These are the words used by Louis Vives, a Spanish divine, to which he adds, 'I hardly see what difference can be made betwixt the opinion many have of their saints, and that of the Gentiles, of those they esteemed their gods.' Polydore Virgil owns 'that they were arrived at such a degree of folly that that part of devotion came not far short of impiety.'† We have now as much reason as Lactantius had, to say: 'These fools do not consider that if their images could feel, or move, they would themselves worship the maker and polisher of them. They who are endued with sense, adore what is insensible! they who are endued with reason worship what is void of reason! and they who are descended from heaven, that which is born of earth!‡

The chief reason for which the ancient fathers of the Church accused the pagans of idolatry was, that among other honours which they paid to their images, this was the most common, to say their prayers before them; all who understand Latin know the word 'to adore' signifies to direct one's prayer to a certain object; and the ancient pagans used to say they 'came from adoration,' when they had said their prayers before an image; as it may be read in a passage of Euripides' 'Tragedies,'§ where one of the

\* Lud. Vives in Aug. de Civit. Dei, Lib. VIII., Ch. xxvii.

† Pol. Virg., Lib. VI., Ch. xiii.

‡ Lact., Lib. II., Ch. ii.

§ Euripid. in Hipolit.

actors, to signify that he had paid his adoration to Venus, saith he had prayed before her statue.

If those of the Romish Church do not repeat their prayers before images, they are in the right to say they do not adore them, and that they are wrongfully ranked with the ancient pagans. But we have already showed that they pray, not only before their images, but that they address their prayers to them as if Jesus Christ Himself was there present.

The material difference those of the Church of Rome pretend is betwixt them and the pagans about the worship of images is, that they pay their devotion to the images of God, of Jesus Christ, of the blessed Virgin, of the angels and of the saints, which are representations of true and real existences; whereas the pagans worshipped idols, that is to say, the images or representations of false gods, which the Scriptures call vanities, 'which are nothing in the world,'\* as St. Paul expresses it. To this I will not allege the many replies which may be read in the books of our authors, but will only add that the images of the pagans, as well as those of the Church of Rome, were representations of true and real things; for, like them, they had such, of Him whom they esteemed the true God, and of men who had been in the world, and had, by their great actions, made themselves commendable. Most part of those they worshipped as gods were men, of whom mention is made in the Old Testament. Their Saturn was Adam, in whose days was the golden age, understanding thereby the happy times he passed in innocency in the earthly paradise. By Jupiter, who drove his father away, and married his sister, Cain is to be understood, who caused his father so much grief, and

\* 1 Cor. viii. 4.

who doubtless married his sister. Vulcan, who, they say, was the first smith, and made his father Jupiter's thunderbolts, was that Tubal Cain, the grandson of Cain, who, as Moses relates, 'was the first forger of instruments of brass and iron,' and who, without doubt, made some for his grandfather. All these idols were taken from true and real models. Ruffin writes, 'That it was the opinion of many that the idol Serapis (in so high esteem among the Egyptians), representing a man bearing a bushel on his head, was a statue designed at first to the honour of Joseph, because of the wheat he had distributed during the famine.'\* Nevertheless this image of so holy a man was converted into a detestable idol, which was destroyed in Theodosius's time in the year 389.

Whatever veneration the pagans had for their images, that was no bar to their resentment and ill-usage of them whenever they were enraged against them. Thus, when the people of Arcadia went out to hunt they offered sacrifices to the image of Pan, their chief idol, to obtain his favour; but if the sport answered not their expectation, at their return they used to throw onions at the head of their god in despite; as the poet Theocritus† observes, and Sabellicus‡ writes of Nero, who, despising all the other divinities, bore a respect only for a statue of the goddess Syria, but when he was out of humour he would piss against it.

Among the people of the Romish communion, there are examples of this fantastical devotion. Bodin acquaints us

\* Ruffin, Lib. II., Hist. Ind. Firmicus, Cap. xiv.

† Theoc. in Thalsie., Nat. Comes. in Mytheol., Lib. V., Ch. vi.

‡ Sabell., Lib. II., Enn. 7.

that, being at Toulouse, the children, in open day, in sight of all the people, dragged the holy images, and even the crucifix to the river, to oblige them to send rain, for which reason those images were called *Tirre Masse*.\* Schenkus, in his 'Treatise of Images,' saith, 'It is a custom in many parts of Germany to drag the images of St. Paul and St. Urban to the river, if, on the day of their feast, it happens to be foul weather.'† And John Bohemian Auban, in his Book of the 'Manners of the Nations,' speaking of Franconia, acquaints us, that 'On the day of the Feast of St. Urban, the wine-reapers set up tables in the middle of the field, which they cover with a cloth and sweet herbs, and place thereon the statue of St. Urban. If it be fair weather that day they crown it with flowery garlands, and pay it all imaginable honour; but if it happens to rain they bedaub it all over with dirt.'‡ Molan, in his 'History of Holy Images,' relates the same thing.§

Besides the images the pagans had in their temples, they erected others to their genii, or tutelary deities, on their doors, and corners of their houses, on the high roads, on bridges, and all other places, so that, as the poet Prudentius hath it,

'Non propria vacat angulus ullus ab umbra'

—that is to say, 'They leave no corner without a familiar.' Those of the Church of Rome practise the same. There are on the gates of the cities, at the corners of particular houses, the corners of streets, and on bridges, niches for the saints of the respective places. Molan owns this is

\* *Dæmonolog.*, Lib. II., Ch. viii.

† Ch. xiii.

‡ *De Moribus Gentium*, Lib. III., Chap. xv.

§ Lib. III., Ch. xix.

done in imitation of the pagans. 'It is well done,' saith he, 'to put up in public places crosses, and images of saints, as was decreed in the second Nicene Council, for if the pagans, as St. Clement saith, erected on their roads a Mercury, how much more becoming is it for us to erect the images of the saints in public places, to implore their assistance.'\* From this example, one may be convinced how easy it is for anyone, who has a greater share of zeal than reason, to fall into the grossest idolatry; for it is no more than only changing the name of the object, without the least alteration in the substance.

\* Molan de Hist. Sanct. Im., Lib. II., Ch. xlv.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OF PRAYERS, OF AGNUS DEIS, OF FUNERALS, OF THE SOUND OF BELLS, AND OF PURGATORY.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, as is recorded in St. Matthew, condemns a bad custom of the pagans in their prayers, and warns His disciples not to imitate their example. 'When you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathens do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.'\* To learn what must be understood by these vain repetitions, one has no more to do than to read the 'Ritual of the Church of Rome;' the 'Canonical Hours;' those they call 'Of our Lady;' the 'Rosary,' and such like prayer-books, or rather vain repetitions; where these words, 'Kyrie Eleison,' 'Christe Eleison,' 'Ora pro nobis,' 'Domine exaudi nos,' are repeated a hundred times over in imitation of the priests spoken of in the first Book of Kings,† who bawled out from morning to noon, 'Baal, exaudi nos' (Baal, hear us). They are so much prepossessed with the belief that much talking and many repetitions are of weight in prayer, that they count them with beads, to the number they think needful to complete the payment, giving God so many Paters, so many Credos and Ave Marias, as if 'heaven was to be forced by that

\* Ch. vi. 7.

† Ch. xviii. 16.

crowd of words ;' as Tertullian said of the pagans, ' Agmine verborum Deum adeundum putant.\*' These also said their prayers by tale, and used, as now, a string of beads ; you may see the figure of it in Du Choul,† who hath copied it from an old medal ; they are beads threaded like our Paternosters.

Pentheus, in the third book of Ovid's ' *Metamorphoses*,' seeing a troop of men and women at Thebes, who, at the sound of drums, and the vociferation of the Bacchantes (as if on a sudden), seized with a spirit of frenzy, run through the streets, told them : ' What ! has the noise of a bason beat with sticks, the sound of flutes, the cries of a few women, and the sound of your bells tinkling in your ears, been able so suddenly to change you ?' Is there not reason for telling the same to the devotees of the Church of Rome, when hearing either the little bell that rings before the sacrament, or the signal at noon, and vespers, called the Ave Maria, as if on a sudden struck with lunacy, you see them stop at once in the street, fall on their knees, thump their breasts, cross themselves, and mutter some words.

#### OF AGNUS DEIS.

Plutarch, in his ' *Life of Romulus*,' assures us that the children of the Romans, but most particularly those of the best sort, wore about their necks little balls in the shape of a heart, by them called Bullæ, imagining that they had the virtue to protect them against sorceries and tempests. To this has succeeded in the Church of Rome the Agnus Deis,

\* Tertul. de Orat.

† Page 255.

as they are called. These are composed of virgin's wax, balsam, and chrism; these are also hung round children's necks with the same intent, for they tell us that these small figures have the virtue to preserve those who wear them from all manner of accidents, and heap on them all kinds of happiness. The properties of that antidote are expressed in those lines which Pope Urban V. subjoined to one of those Agnus Deis, which he sent to the Greek emperor; they are too pretty to be omitted :

'Balsamus et munda cera, cum Chrismatis unda  
Conficiunt agnum, quod munus do tibi magnum,  
Fulgura de sursum depellit, omne malignum  
Peccatum frangit, ut Christi sanguis et angit,  
Pregnans servatur, simul et partus liberatur,  
Dona desert dignis, virtutem destruet ignis,  
Portatus munde de fluctibus eripit undæ.'

'The great present I make thee is an Agnus Dei, compounded of virgin wax, balsam, and chrism. It hath the virtue to secure from thunder-bolts, it destroys the evil of sin as well as the blood of Christ does. It preserves pregnant women, and the child when born. It confers grace on the worthy, and breaks the force of fire. It protects from the danger of waters all those who wear it in purity.' Cardinal Baronius acknowledges this conformity, saying, 'Those who have been baptized wear an Agnus Dei round their necks, out of devotion, derived from a superstition of the pagans, who fastened about the necks of their children small bottles, to preserve them from sorcery and enchantments. These bottles were made in the form of a heart, to teach them that to be men they must have heart, or courage. In like manner the Christians wear the image



of the Lamb, to learn by His example to be humble and meek of heart.\*

#### OF FUNERALS.

'Tis much the same with the funeral ceremonies. In the Church of Rome, although they be performed by daylight, they nevertheless carry lighted flambeaux to their burials, in imitation of the heathens; as Polydore Virgil owns. 'To honour the funeral pomps,' saith he, 'especially of the kings and nobles, the people walk before the corpse with lighted torches;† as Virgil says of that of Pallantus, 'Lucet via longo ordine flammæ,' that is to say, the street is lighted by a long train of fire. And it is infallibly from thence that the same is practised in our ceremonies. And even the Latin word *funus*, which signifieth the company of a burial, is derived from *funale*, signifying a torch, because they always buried with flambeaux, as Servius observes on the sixth *Æneid*.

It is the custom of those of the Romish Church to have a basin with holy water at the door of the house where there is a dead body; and those who go out, or pass by in the street, sprinkle themselves and the coffin, wherein the corpse lieth. The pagans did the same. 'Those who were come to a house of mourning,' saith Pollux, 'cleansed themselves at their going out, sprinkling themselves with the water that was kept for that purpose in an earthen vessel.‡ And Virgil, when giving us a description of the obsequies of Misenus in his sixth *Æneid*, tells us that Chorinea,

\* Ann. Eccles. 58.

† Lib. VI., Cap. x.

‡ Poll., Lib. VIII., Ch. viii.

having put the bones into a brass vessel, sprinkled three times with fair water all those who were present, making use of an olive-branch for the sprinkler.

‘Idem ter socios purâ circumtulit unda  
Spargens rore levi, et ramo felicis olivæ.’

To this custom Ovid alludes,\* when mentioning the return of Juno from hell (where she had been among the dead) he saith, that before her entrance into heaven, her messenger Iris, or the rainbow, poured dewy water upon her, to purge her from the bad air of hell.

‘Læta redit Juno, quam cœlum intrare parantem  
Roratis lustravit aquis, Thaumantias Iris.’

The ancient Romans employed certain persons named *designatores*, clothed in black, to invite people to funerals and to carry the coffin. There are persons in our days who wear the same clothing and serve the same office. ‘The Romans,’ saith Marolles, ‘had in those ceremonies lictors dressed in black who did the office of our mourners.’†

#### OF THE SOUND OF BELLS.

When anyone of the Roman communion is dead, especially if he be rich and hath bequeathed a legacy to the Church, the parish bells are immediately set a-ringing, ‘The sound of which have the virtue to shake and divert the powers of the air, as it is mentioned in the prayer the bishop makes use of when he baptizeth the bell.’‡

\* Metam., Lib. IV., Fab. 13.

† Page 313.

‡ Ritual, the Chapter of Bened

The same thing was practised by the Romans, as we may learn from the ancient Greek scholiast upon Theocritus, who assures us that they held the opinion in his time that the sound of bells had the virtue of driving away devils and dissipating spectres.\* It was also a ceremony among the Lacedæmonians, when their king was dead, instead of bells, to make use of their kettles, by beating upon them with sticks.

#### OF PURGATORY.

The Church of Rome prays for the dead. The pagans did the same. Witness that line of Ovid, cited by Marolles: 'Ossa quieta precor tuta requiescite in urna.' 'I pray that his bones may rest quietly in the urn.'

We have before observed that the service for the dead as done in our days, either at the end of some time, or from year to year, is in imitation of the pagans, as Marolles acknowledges. 'The ancients,' saith he, 'performed the nine days' devotion, and, according to Virgil's testimony, called those nine days' devotion sacred.† It is not at all surprising that the ceremonies for the dead are the same, since they have the same sentiments about the state of the dead. For Plato‡ has not only laid the foundation for purgatory, but has raised it to the height it now appears. He ranges the souls of the deceased in three classes, as Eusebius§ acquaints us in his evangelical preparation: such as have led good

\* In Theocr. Pharmaceutria.

† Mem., p. 212.

‡ Plato in Gorgia item de Anima in Phædone.

§ Eus., Lib. XI., c. ult.

lives are received into the Elysian fields in pure and celestial habitations ; the wicked, whose malice hath been desperate, are condemned to the eternal torments of hell. But a third sort, viz., the souls of those who, though they have not led the lives of perfect saints, have, nevertheless, not wholly abandoned themselves to evil, but have committed venal sins, these he condemns to a fire of purgatory, where they suffer, one a longer, another a shorter time, till their purgation is completed. For these the pagans offered up prayers and sacrifices, as is done now, for their comfort, and for obtaining a shorter duration of their pains. And as the legends often tells us stories of the souls coming out of purgatory into the world to pray for succour, and to complain of their sufferings, so Virgil, in his sixth *Æneid*, informs us that the soul of Palinurus came to beseech Eneas to ease his pains, to which the sybil answers that his manes must be appeased and solemn sacrifices offered for them.

Will you have a description of purgatory, read what this poet hath given us in the said sixth book, and you will find that Pope Gregory I. hath copied from thence the best part of what he hath in his *Dialogues*. He says that some souls are purged by fire, others by water, or by air. All this is Virgil's invention, who will have it, that the souls having contracted certain stains by their commerce with bodies, are purged after this life before they be received into the blessed mansions.

' Ergo exercentur poenis, veterumque malorum  
Supplicia expendunt ; aliæ panduntur inanes  
Suspensæ ad ventos, aliis sub gurgito vasto  
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exurit igni  
Quisque suos patimur manes,' etc.

They are exercised with punishments on this account, and undergo pains suited to their past offences. Some are hung up to the winds, others immersed in water, a third sort exposed to fire. Each of us suffer for our own crimes.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CONCLUSION, AND REPLY TO THE REASONS OF OUR ADVERSARIES.

ONE may, without the least difficulty, by the relations already made, and to which many more might be added, see the entire conformity there is between the pagan religion and that of the present Church of Rome. Now, since their ceremonies flow from a source so impure, is there no room for wonder that she strives so eagerly to subject all Christians to them, that she stigmatizes all who reject them as profane, as enemies of God and all piety, and that she causes so many disturbances for the vindication of such trash? The greatest monarchs occasionally abate of their ceremonies, and the nation which showeth itself so learned in these matters and sells such wares with a gold scale, knows how to be liberal of them when its interest, which is styled by them the master of ceremonies, requires it. Wherefore do they insist with so much obstinacy on those very things which infidels have introduced into religion? Why, rather than recede from the least tittle, doth she choose to set all Europe at variance? The reason is so plain that all the world may perceive it: that the same interest which makes her so flexible with regard to the ceremonies in civil life, obliges her to maintain those of

religion with so much stiffness. What is very surprising is that the eyes of those who have not the least interest therein should not be opened, but that they should still continue to have a veneration for those things they ought to detest. How can it be said that these impurities are of Divine institution; that the Holy Ghost is the Author of them? 'That if Plato forbids the opening one's mouth against the laws of the Cretans and Lacedemonians, a respect infinitely greater is due for ceremonies which are known with certainty to have proceeded from the Spirit of God, who presides over His Church, who loves her, who preserves her, and prevents her from the possibility of falling into errors?'—as Cardinal Hosius expresses himself.\* I appeal to the conscience of man whether the spirit of God or the spirit of ambition hath established in the Church the authority of a sovereign pontiff, his grandeur and worldly pomp, his tiara, his purple, his gold, his pearls and diamonds; the various sects of monks, their vows, their austerities, their celibacy, abstinence from certain meats; the consecration of holy water, of oil, balm, ashes, salt, spittle, tapers, and incense; the dedication of temples, the consecration of altars, of veils, of gold and silver vessels; the canonization of dead men, the invocation of them, the adoration of their bones and of their images; the observation of festivals, the Agnus Deis, strings of beads, the baptizing of bells and their virtue of expelling evil spirits; those long and pompous processions, that melodious music, that vast variety of habits, the colour and fashion whereof are big with mysterious meanings? Have all these preparations, which stifle religion, the least foundation in the

\* Hosius, Lib. IV., de Trad.

Word of God? Are they not wholly of human invention? Do these ornaments become the chaste spouse of the Lord, whose glory is all internal? Or the great whore, who was to borrow all those trinkets from Babylon, and who is figured out in the Revelation adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones.† St. Hierom, speaking of ceremonies, compares the ancient Jews to those who eat the flesh, the Christians to those who suck the marrow, and the modern Jews to the dogs which gnaw the bones, because they amuse themselves with the bark of the ceremonies, of which we have the truth in Jesus Christ. But to whom should he compare those who stick at the invention of the pagans? Would he not say that they act like crows, which feed upon carrion?

When one considers the simplicity of the primitive Christian worship, and compares it with that confusion and prodigious mixture which hath been added to it, is there no room for that declaration of Isaiah, 'How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water'?‡ In the Apostles' time, the whole service consisted in the plain preaching of the Gospel; in prayers put up to God for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and for the prosperity of the king and magistrates, to the end 'that under their government the faithful might lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty';§ singing of psalms, praises, and spiritual hymns; the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the one celebrated with plain water,

\* Psalm xlv.

† Rev. xvii.

‡ Isa. i. 21, 22.

§ 1 Tim. ii.



‘In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,’ and the other with ‘bread and wine in remembrance of the death of the Lord.’\* The most solemn meetings were on Sunday, in memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, where, after the faithful had heard the Word of God read and expounded, everyone gave his alms for the relief of the poor, as may be read in the Corinthians.† For the three following centuries they continued in the same simplicity, as appears by the second Apology, of Justin Martyr. ‘On the day which is called the Day of the Sun,’ saith he, ‘the people of city or country assemble together in one place, where is read for some time the instructions of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets. When the reader hath done, the pastor makes an exhortation to the people, to excite them to the imitation of the excellent things they have heard ; after this, we all rise to pray. Bread, wine, and water are brought in, the same pastor then again prays, and offers praises, and all the people say “Amen ;” then those things, for which thanks were given, come to be distributed to all present, and are sent by the deacons to those who are absent. And they who have the means, and have the will, give what they please ; and what hath been collected is given to the pastor for the relief of orphans and widows, and such as either through sickness or otherwise are reduced to want, or to prisoners or strangers.’ These were all the ceremonies used by the first Christians, to which they joined the singing of psalms, as may be gathered from the sundry writings of Tertullian,‡ and, among others, what he saith about women, who came to

\* Col. iii.

† Cor. xvi. 2.

‡ Tert. de Veland. Virg. in fin.

the meeting only to be seen. 'What punishment,' saith he, 'do those deserve who have their heads uncovered whilst psalms are singing and the name of God is spoken?' The Church continued yet in that simplicity of evangelical worship, of which St. Augustin speaks, that 'Jesus Christ hath submitted His followers to a gentle yoke, and hath cemented together the society of His new people by sacraments, which are very few in number, very easy to observe, and very excellent in their signification.'\*

But as the Israelites in the desert were soon tired with manna, which, to their depraved taste, appeared too simple, and longed after the fleshpots and onions of Egypt, so men have thought the Gospel established a religion too simple and too naked, and have imagined it needful to adorn it with the trappings of human traditions and ceremonies. Those who have assumed the appellation of vicars of Jesus Christ, and successors of St. Peter, have imagined themselves wiser than either the one or the other. These sons of Adam have been smitten with the vanity of their father, believing themselves wiser than God. The disciples have presumed to know more than their Master, and human ignorance to have a more capacious understanding than Divine wisdom. This foolish imagination (for the wisdom of man is folly before God) hath by little and little introduced superstitions into the Church, and opened a gate for errors, which have carried the administration of sacred mysteries so far from the purity of their first institution, insomuch that, before the Reformation, they had reduced Christianity into a state nothing less than Christian; for it may without exaggeration be said that all the ceremonies of

\* Aug. ad Jan., Ep. 128.

the Jews, all the superstitions of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans together, were simple in comparison of the multitude and the confusion of those of our days.

And yet this is the outward appearance which enchants the populace; they swallow down the poison of pagan superstition with pleasure, because it is offered them in a golden cup, covered with the name of 'Christian.' A religion thus set off appears beautiful to children, who suck it in with their milk, and to carnal minds, who judge of things by their senses. Even those who are endowed with knowledge superior to the vulgar, and who know and are assured that these ceremonies were derived from the heathens, are so far from using their superior knowledge to draw the people from error, that, on the contrary, they abuse it: to continue them therein, and to give it a gloss, the Abbot Marolles saith that 'those things are not the worse for having been practised by the Gentiles, because God, when He pleases, sanctifieth the things that are indifferent, especially when they are put to a pious use.'\* And Cardinal Baronius uses this comparison, 'That the Christian Church hath imitated that of Israel, who, by the command of God, have employed the gold and silver of the Egyptians to the service of the true God, making therewith sacred vessels.†' Thus these men 'call evil good,‡ and 'darkness light.§ But it is easy to prove that 'they are become vain in their reasonings, and that, believing themselves wise, they are nothing less than wise.' For do not they know that God never gave men so much authority as to permit them to settle, accord-

\* Mem. de Mar., p. 212.

† Ann. Eccl., in the year 44, toward the end.

‡ Isa. v. 20.

§ 2 Cor. vi.

ing to their own sense, the form of His service ; that He alone is the supreme Legislator who can save and destroy ; and that there is no other besides His only Son, of whom He hath called from heaven, that He should be hearkened unto ? Do they not know that this true Head of the Church (in order to declare void the customs which the doctors of the Jews had introduced into religion) says no more than this, that they were of human invention. ‘In vain,’ saith He, ‘they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the traditions of men.’\* Have they not observed that His Apostle useth the same argument to refute all the ceremonies which the teachers endeavoured to impose upon the Christians, however specious, and whatever show of holiness they bore ? ‘Why do they subject you to ordinances ?’ saith he to the faithful Colossians ; ‘touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandment of men.’† This reason alone is so strong, and God in His Word shows so much His abhorrence of the rashness of those who presume, without His special direction, to usher in any novelty in religion, that the Scripture, to express God’s dislike of any such thing, only saith that God hath not commanded it. Thus, to show His abhorrence of the idolatry of the Jews (who burnt their children in honour of idols), the Lord saith no more than this : ‘They have built the high places of Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I command them not ; neither came it into My heart.’‡ For this reason it was that the wrath of God was kindled against Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron,

\* Math. xv. 9.

† Col. ii.

‡ Jer. vii. 31.

though they were legal priests, because, saith Moses, their uncle, they lighted before the Lord 'a strange fire, which God had not commanded.\*' To know, therefore, if the ceremonies, to which the Christians are so subjected, should be received or not, one need do no more than see if God hath commanded them, in which case nobody will refuse due submission; but if they be of men only, as it is confessed, and those men profane and infidels, wretched heathens who have not had the least communion with God, or no share in His covenant, and have lived and died without hope and without God in the world, they ought to be rejected, pursuant to that irrevocable order of heaven: 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; you shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it.†'

But it is said, We have sanctified these false services by consecrating them to the true God, whereas they were employed before in honour of idols. And who gave you the power of making this change? Who told you that God will approve it, and take delight to see the spirits of demons in His temples, and on His altars? Whereon do you ground your assurance for undertaking matters of that importance? How shall sinful and impure men boast of the power of sanctifying abominations because they are pleased to apply them to another use than that for which the devil had invented them? Though these ceremonies were of an indifferent nature, that is to say, neither good nor bad, they are become impure by the ill use which has been made of them. St. Paul teacheth us this maxim when, speaking of the victims which the heathens offered to their false gods, he forbids the Corinthians to 'eat of their flesh,

\* Lev. x. 1.

† Deut. xii. 32.

giving this reason for it, that, however innocent they were in their own nature, they have been defiled by idolatry, having been sacrificed to devils. Who doubts the flesh of these poor animals, 'being creatures of God, not to be good?'\* But the ill use that had been made of them had defiled them, and that made the Apostle say 'that to eat thereof is to have communion with devils.'† Must not we say the same thing of all pagan ceremonies, that having been infected through the consecration, which hath been made of them to demons, to practise them is to hold communion with them? To all these things must be extended the exhortation of the same Apostle: 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things; and I will receive you.'‡ But the worst of all is that the greatest part of those ceremonies are impious and bad, condemned in the Word of God, and expressly thrown out of His service; as is that of raising a mortal man in the temple of God, and worshipping him as if he were God. To make images of the Divinity, and the resemblance of the things which are in heaven and on earth, etc.; to fall down before them and worship them; to invoke dead men and chimeras, which never had any existence; to direct prayers to them; to swear by their name; to build temples and erect altars; to burn incense, and sacrifice the only Son of God in honour of them; to worship water, wood, and relics—can it be said that these things are sanctified, and 'the clean hath been drawn from the impure'?§ 'If the pope hath the power of making that which is sin not to be sin,'|| and the most enormous crimes

\* 1 Cor. x. 19.

† 1 Tim. iv.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 17.

§ Job xiv. 4.

|| Bellarmine contra Barclai.

become virtues, as his flatterers give out, he may, by the same power, make idolatry to become holy ceremonies. There is no doubt that, if it was in the power of men to sanctify any one ceremony (as is commonly said), there are none which could with more justice claim our acceptance than those of the law of Moses, for God Himself had appointed and authorized the establishing of them by many great miracles; yet He would not give them admittance into the new covenant. St. Paul declared to those who were for retaining circumcision, 'that Christ will not profit them.\*' He condemns the Galatians for observing the Jewish feast days.† In the Council of Jerusalem, for that reason assembled by the Apostles, St. Peter said it was tempting God to restore among the Christians the ceremonies of Moses, which he calls an insupportable burthen;‡ and St. Paul exhorts the faithful to stand firm in the liberty wherewith Jesus Christ hath set them free, and not to suffer themselves to be again brought under the yoke of bondage.§ Is there the least likelihood that Christ should have delivered us from the Mosaical yoke to put us under that of Numa Pompilius, or rather of the evil spirit, with which that magician had communication?

We have reason to praise God, who, lest His Church should be left to an unavoidable corruption, would not suffer the good grain in His field to be stifled by the tares of His enemy, but hath, in favour of His elect, reduced things to their first principle; raised up faithful servants, who have rent in twain the veil of those ceremonies—some vain, and other impious—calling aloud in every place that

\* Gal. v. 2.

‡ Acts xv.

† Gal. iv. 10.

§ Gal. v. 1.

God would not be served with such pomps and such vanities, but by the impulses of an enlightened spirit, and the dictates of a good conscience. We have not among us those vast buildings, nor those huge heaps of stone, wherein to contain our assemblies, neither have we those rich altars, nor those images so gaudily adorned; nor have we that diverting music, nor that noise of bells, nor those triumphant processions; we may be reproached (as most commonly is done) with the same thing which was said to the primitive Christians, that our religion is too bare, 'that we have neither temples, nor images, nor altars, nor sacrifices, nor perfumes.'\* We will not take offence at it, but, with those faithful ancients, answer: 'What image should we make of God, since we are ourselves His image? What temple should we build for Him, since this whole world, which He hath Himself formed, is not capacious enough to contain Him? And if we who are but men are yet desirous to live in large habitations, should we dare to confine the virtue of so immense a Majesty in a small chapel? Is it not better to dedicate Him in our understanding, and to consecrate Him in the bottom of our breasts? Shall I offer to my God those hosts and victims which He hath made for my use? The sacrifice that is pleasing to Him is a good soul, a pure mind, and a sincere faith; to live in innocence is worshipping the Lord. To do justice is making aspersions to God; to abstain from fraud is appeasing Him; to save a man from danger is immolating to Him a fat victim. These are our sacrifices, our Divine ceremonies. The most honest man of us is esteemed the most devout.' We will say with Origen, answering the

\* Minu. in Octa.



philosopher Celsus, who ridiculed the simplicity of the Christians, who then had neither altars, churches, nor images: 'Our altars are the mind of every just man, whence we send up on high the perfumes of most sweet odour; that is to say, prayers proceeding from a pure conscience. Virtues are our images; our bodies are the temples of God.'\* In suchlike holy disposition of soul consists that true devotion which is pleasing to God; whereas that of the pagans, the Pharisee, and of the false Christian, minds nothing but exterior things; take away from him those vain amusements—he remains without any religion at all. Thus that ancient declaimer in Seneca tells us that Phidias, when the Elians had cut off his hands as a sacrilegious person, after he had carved them the idol of Jupiter Olympius, complained that before that time he could make them gods; but that now, his hands being cut off, he could not so much as worship them; as if adoration consisted in the elevation of hands towards an image. True it is that such gods wanted no better worshippers; but the true God requires the affections of the heart, and the holy disposition of a regenerated soul.

It may be asked: Must there, then, be no ceremonies at all in religion? To put them entirely away were to make the earthly Church like the heavenly, where there shall need no symbols, but naked truths. I answer: Those alone are to be retained which are commanded in the Gospel. In conformity whereof, we meet together in one place to hear the Word of God, and jointly to worship Him. We fall on our knees, and raise our eyes and hands to heaven when we pray; we sing aloud the praises of our Creator and Saviour;

\* Origen, l. 8, contra Cels., p. 400.

we celebrate, moreover, the sacred ceremonies of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But when we meet together, our meaning is not to attribute any particular devotion or holiness to the buildings, commonly called churches, as if God was more pleased with the prayers made to Him in one place than another—and we have those edifices destined for holy assemblies in all parts of the world whatever—knowing that ‘the earth is the Lord's,’\* and that ‘He hath given to His Son all nations for His inheritance, and for His possessions the utmost parts of the earth.’ When we kneel before Him, and lift up our eyes to heaven, we do not intend thereby to limit our adoration to any particular object, but in order to pay homage to God with our bodies as well as with our souls. When we sing His praises aloud, our design is that ‘our mouths and all within us should praise the name of His holiness,’ and to excite our minds by the actions of our bodies to a true and entire devotion. As to the holy sacraments, they are sacred symbols which the Son of God Himself hath instituted, in a very small number, and with the utmost simplicity, for memorials of His grace and our redemption, as pledges of His love and infallible earnestness of His heavenly inheritance, whereby His holy truth is taught us plainly, and without the least obscurity; and thus this small number of ceremonies does not hinder the Christian religion, like the pagan, the Jewish, and Samaritan, from being a religion entirely spiritual and heavenly, such as the supreme Doctor of the Church hath described to us.

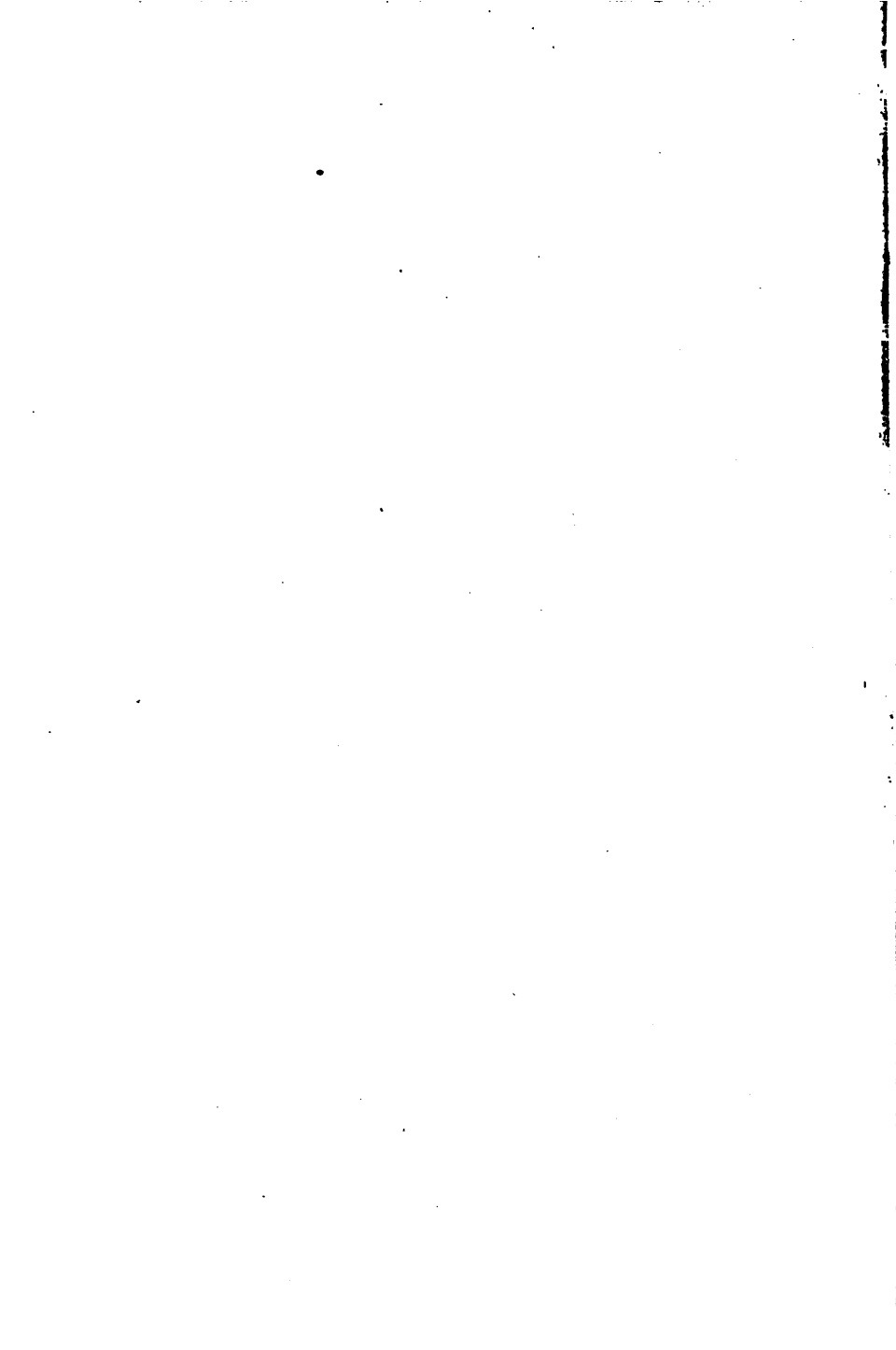
Let us, then, carefully preserve the precious deposit of the wholesome doctrine. Let us inviolably hold fast this

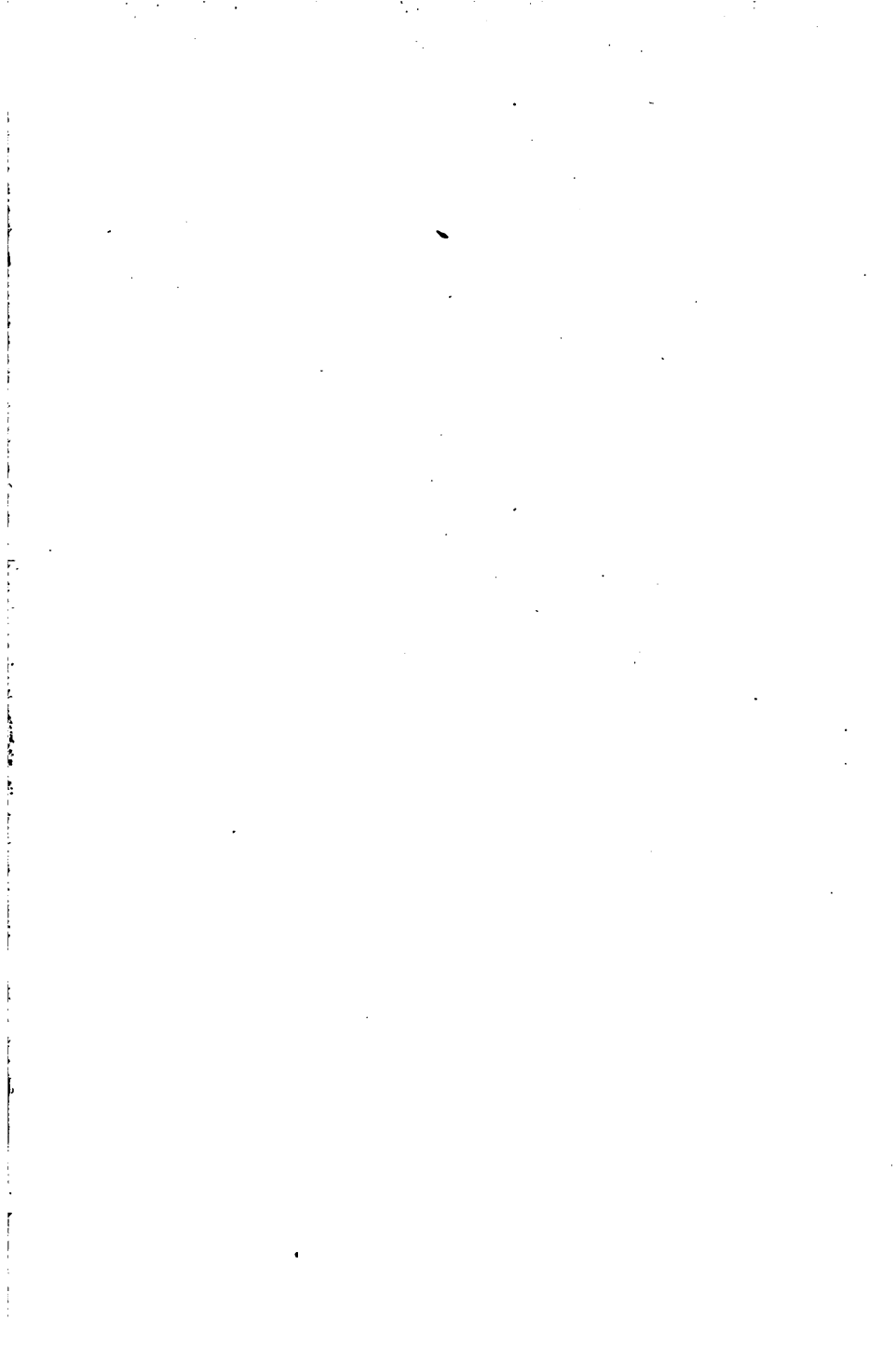
\* Psalm ii.

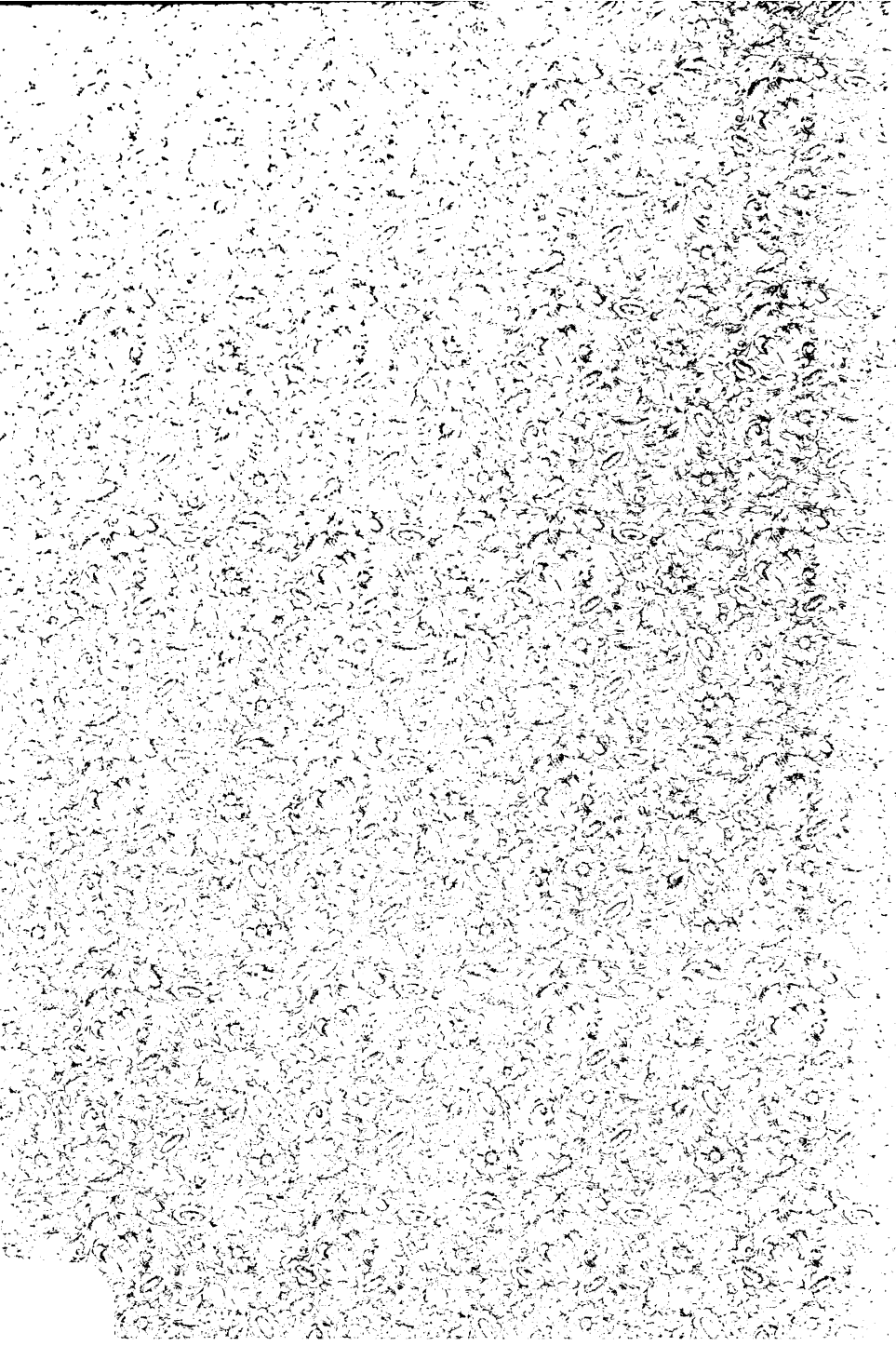
purity and simplicity which our Lord hath set before us in His Word. Let us be firmly persuaded that He is infinitely more wise and prudent than we, and that the perfection and excellency of true religion consists in doing His will, not ours, and in serving Him with the affection of a pure heart, but not with the pomp of many ceremonies.

THE END.











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